Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Mohammad H. Adam

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Postsecondary Arabic-Speaking English as a Foreign Language Learners' Perceptions of

Learning English Sentence Structure

by

Mohammad H. Adam

MA, Cambridge College, 2017

BA, Hebron University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Reading, Literacy, Assessment and Evaluation

Walden University

August 2024

Abstract

Writing proper English sentences poses a significant challenge for Arabic-speaking

postsecondary students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) due to substantial

differences between Arabic and English syntactic structures. This basic qualitative study

explored the perceptions of Arabic-speaking EFL learners at an Arabian university

regarding the challenges they faced in mastering English sentence structure, especially

after analyzing errors in their written assignments. The conceptual framework for the

study used Corder's error analysis model and Selinker's interlingual theory to guide

students in revising their errors. The research questions focused on students' perceptions

of learning English sentence structure and identifying syntactic errors in their writing.

Data were collected through interviews with 10 Arabic-speaking English majors at an

Arabian university and analyzed using thematic analysis, including NVivo coding of

students' responses and second-level category coding. The findings were verified for

trustworthiness through member checking and detailed descriptions. Results indicated

that Arabic-speaking EFL learners struggle with English sentence structure due to

grammatical differences between Arabic and English, causing anxiety and reduced

confidence. Common errors included incorrect verb tenses, punctuation, and word order,

often due to direct translation. Learners employed digital tools, self-reviews, and

instructor feedback to overcome these issues, underscoring the need for educational

methods tailored to these linguistic challenges. These findings could foster positive social

change by enhancing English mastery for academic and professional success.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my beloved twins, Tia and Naya, my daughter Elma, and my wife, Safa. Each step taken is a testament to the idea that anything is achievable. I aim to demonstrate that our circumstances do not define our potential or accomplishments. Hard work, commitment, and resilience will guide us in the right direction. The path was challenging, but they witnessed my dedication. I am grateful for their understanding and support, which allowed me to focus without too many distractions. In many ways, all of you share this accomplishment.

Acknowledgments

I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Ellen Scales, who truly rescued me when I began to doubt whether I would ever complete this study. Her willingness to accept me as one of her doctoral candidates and her unwavering support from the prospectus to the final study was instrumental in my success. Thank you, Dr. Scales, for your guidance and encouragement. I am incredibly grateful and blessed to have had your mentorship.

I also want to sincerely thank Dr. Billie Andersson for her invaluable insights and support throughout this journey. Her constructive feedback and encouragement were crucial in shaping the direction of my research. Dr. Andersson, your expertise and patience have been greatly appreciated, and your contributions have significantly impacted the completion of this study. Thank you for believing in my work and helping me see it through.

I also want to acknowledge the participants of my study. Each of you volunteered valuable time during an incredibly challenging period in education. Despite the unforeseen circumstances and the demands of your already crowded schedules, you chose to contribute to my research. Because of your generosity and commitment, I have completed this journey today. Thank you all so much.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Sentence structure competence is one aspect of written English that needs to be mastered by students to compose writing and achieve academic success (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Nasser, 2020; Toba & Noor, 2019). Knowing a language's syntax requires understanding sentence structures (Yaseen et al., 2018). However, Schicchi et al. (2019) discovered that syntactic complexity poses a significant structural challenge for many English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Hafiz et al. (2018) discovered that over 50% of Arab EFL learners in Saudi Arabia at various learning levels could not appropriately construct English sentences.

Syntax errors stem from a failure to know and follow grammatical rules (Farooq, 2019). Researchers have found that postsecondary Arabic-speaking EFL learners struggle to master English sentence structure (Al-Khresheh, 2010; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). Writing is a complex process for most EFL learners, and mistakes in writing are common to language learners while they are learning and understanding English language structure (Amiri & Puteh, 2017).

Because Arabic syntactic structure is significantly different from English, Arab EFL learners commit errors in sentence structure based on their dominant language structure (Adila, 2019; Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020). Evidence from multiple studies showed that Arabic sentences can utilize verb-subject-object and subject-verb-object word orders (Adila, 2019; Alhussain, 2018; AlQahtani, 2021; Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020; Jarrah & Abusalim, 2021; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Souadkia, 2017; Yaseen et al., 2018).

However, the challenge for many students is that English has a fixed subject-verb-object word order structure (Adila, 2019; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020).

Early linguists employed the error analysis method to scrutinize the language errors identified in EFL writing samples. According to Corder (1981), learners can better comprehend the reasons behind their errors by understanding the specific traits or characteristics of those errors. Error analysis has become an important area of applied linguistics that helps learners enhance their grammatical skills by analyzing and understanding their linguistic errors and uncovering the underlying causes of such errors (Adila, 2019; Amiri & Puteh, 2017; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019).

Leading linguist scholars and researchers (Corder, 1967; James, 2013; Richards, 1971a; Selinker, 1972) investigated syntactic errors and improved our understanding of second language (L2) learning. These linguists found that most EFL learners used patterns from the native language to express meaning, which is the leading cause of syntactic errors. Recent researchers have replicated earlier findings and demonstrated that Arabic-speaking EFL students frequently use Arabic sentence structures when speaking English (Abi Samra, 2003; Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Farooq, 2019; Khatter, 2019).

Few researchers examined how Arabic-speaking EFL students relied on the sentence structure of their dominant language and how they perceived the errors when conducting their error analysis. In this study, students played an active role in correcting their errors, which had the potential to empower them, increase their motivation and engagement, and offer valuable insights into effective learning techniques. By implementing this approach, researchers could deepen students' comprehension of the

English sentence structure through self-correction and encourage a positive attitude toward language learning

In their investigation of syntactic errors at the sentence level, Atashian and Al-Bahri (2018) discovered that Arab EFL students frequently improperly apply Arabic sentence structure norms when speaking English. Farooq (2019) supported these findings by adding that adult Arab EFL learners encounter difficulties understanding how syntactically sound English sentences are constructed because they find it difficult to combine functional and content terms to produce grammatically sound phrases.

Al-Seghayer (2019) found that Arab ELF students struggled with the variations between the adjective forms in Arabic and English. In English, an adjective comes before a related word; adjectives in Arabic follow the noun it modifies. However, according to Alkhateeb (2018), Arab EFL students lack the appropriate environment to develop their language skills because Arabic is the dominant language. English is often taught and explained in Arabic in most English learning classrooms. Teaching English requires an appropriate setting and linguistic ability (Haberman et al., 2020).

My findings could have made a positive social change for Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners by helping them analyze and understand their syntactic errors in sentence structure. This deeper understanding might have enhanced their readiness to master the intricacies of English syntax and prepared them for college and career success. This chapter included the background of the study, problem statement, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definition of key terms, assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study.

Background

Writing proper English sentences is challenging for postsecondary Arab EFL learners because Arabic syntactic structure differs significantly from English (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Alsamadani, 2010; Erdocia & Laka, 2018; Hashim et al., 2021). The problem addressed through this study was that Arabic-speaking EFL learners studying English at an Arabian university struggled to learn English sentence structure for written assignments. In Arab nations, where English is a foreign language and Arabic is the mother tongue, researchers found a similar pattern of writing errors (Rass, 2015).

In most English learning classrooms, Alkhateeb (2018) found that English is often taught and explained in Arabic, relying on spoken rather than written wording. Few studies focused on the transfer relationships between Arabic and English writing skills. Arab EFL students struggle to write in English since English and Arabic are dissimilar linguistic and orthographic systems (Alsamadani, 2010; Farooq, 2019). Unlike English, Arabic sentence structure has different word orders (El-Dakhs, 2016). Arab EFL learners tend to replicate Arabic structure when writing English sentences. The linguistic challenges Arab EFL learners face increase their anxiety in formal and social interactions, significantly undermining their confidence due to perceived language inadequacy. Consequently, linguistic interference hinders proper language skills and academic achievement (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020).

Hafiz et al. (2018) studied EFL students in Saudi Arabia at various learning levels and found that the majority lack the necessary writing abilities. In 2010, Al-Khresheh made a similar observation, noting that young Jordanian EFL students struggled to

develop adequate, error-free English sentences. Al-Khresheh claimed that the struggle also impacts Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL students because students in higher education find it challenging to write English sentence structures and do not understand the basic structure (2010).

Alqhtani (2017) examined syntactical errors resulting from the vastly different grammar of English and Arabic. Alqhtani found that interlingual interference and a lack of English proficiency are the primary causes of student errors. In another study, Rass (2015) examined Palestinian postsecondary EFL students' difficulties creating coherent English paragraphs. Rass revealed that students had numerous writing issues, including challenges with organization, content, sentence structure, and paragraph structure. Rass determined that the transfer of their native language's writing style was the source of the problem.

Similarly, Al Murshidi (2014) investigated subject-verb agreement and punctuation errors in 15 male students from various colleges at the United Arab Emirates University. The most common errors were the incorrect use of articles, use of auxiliaries, incorrect use of punctuation, misspellings, and subject-verb agreement. Erdocia and Laka's (2018) research results aligned with previous studies, indicating that most students with lower learning proficiency had difficulty comprehending the structural distinctions between Arabic and English and, as a result, made syntactical errors.

Early researchers used error analysis to examine the syntactic errors at the sentence level and improve our understanding of the most common causes and errors in Arab EFL learners' writings. Researchers have found that language learners' errors are

no longer viewed negatively (Abi Samra, 2003; Al-Khresheh, 2010; Diab, 1997).

Nevertheless, there is still some orientation toward error correction as students' primary

source of feedback (Oladejo, 1993). Corder (1973) suggested that the instructor should

correct learners' errors. However, research evidence has indicated that a teacher's error

correction may not effectively get the learner to perform correctly in the target language

(Oladejo, 1993).

It is now generally agreed that students also have significant roles to play if error

correction is to be effective. It is also suggested that self-correction and peer correction

should be encouraged to complement the teacher's role in error correction (Oladejo,

1993). Engaging learners in error analysis can help them learn languages more

effectively. Students can comprehend their errors, take responsibility for them, and learn

to prevent them by critically analyzing them. Learners' self-reflection and self-correction

can be encouraged. As a result, educators can modify their teaching strategies to suit

students' learning needs (Bukit, 2020).

Despite numerous researchers who had examined the writing difficulties of Arab

EFL learners, much of the attention had been given to analyzing errors at the word and

sentence levels using a structural approach, which involved comparing the linguistic

structures of two languages. Some researchers have delved into syntactic-level errors,

such as the overuse of the definite article "the" or the omission of the copula verb "to be"

(Rass, 2015). Students were often passive participants in these studies, defined by

categories and numbers. However, this basic qualitative study aimed to understand

Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students completed their error analyses of their own writing.

This study allowed students to actively learn correct sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis (Oladejo, 1993). Empowering English as foreign language learners to scrutinize the errors in their written works can assist them in identifying the origins of their errors (Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020; Xie, 2019). Instead of acting as passive feedback recipients, self-correction enables students to revise, think about, and use their linguistic proficiency in written writing (Makino, 1993).

These findings could have contributed to positive social change. To succeed in the modern economy, learners of English as a foreign language must be fully functional in English. The study could have helped prepare Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners for college and the workforce by developing proper language skills and concentrating on areas that required additional improvement.

Problem Statement

Researchers have confirmed that learning English as a second language challenges Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Erdocia & Laka, 2018; Hashim et al., 2021). The problem addressed through this study was that Arabic-speaking EFL learners struggle to learn English sentence structure when studying English at an Arabian university. Second language learners need to learn the syntax of the language and the proper arrangement of words (Farooq, 2019). Researchers confirmed that Arabic-speaking postsecondary students must master the necessary

language skills to succeed in postsecondary education and training to find meaningful jobs and possibilities for advancement (Hamed, 2018).

English and Arabic are linguistic and orthographic systems that are considerably distinct (Hafiz et al.,2018). According to researchers, Arabic has been observed to allow for both subject-verb-object (SVO) and verb-subject-object (VSO) word orders, as demonstrated in Figure 1 with further elaboration (Akan et al., 2019; Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Alkhateeb, 2018; Qasem, 2020). However, English word order within sentences and grammatical patterns relies on syntax and meaning (Akan et al., 2019; Igaab & Altai, 2018; Lghzeel & Radzuan, 2020; Ussak & Zaretsky, 2021).

Figure 1

Arabic Sentence Structure
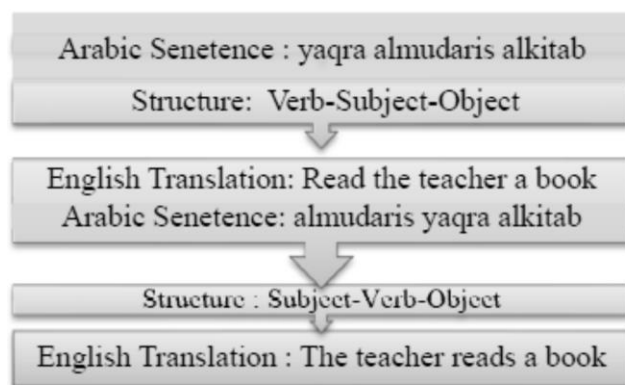
Akan et al. (2019) confirmed the earlier findings that Arabic and English have different syntactic structures. Students with lower learning proficiency struggle with the structural distinctions between language sentence structures (Hashim et al., 2021). Arab EFL learners are expected to make syntactic errors in modal verbs, word order, and adjective order, choose the proper articles and tenses, and form questions and negatives

(Farooq, 2019). Arab EFL learners make sentence construction errors and overgeneralize the target language (Hamed, 2018).

Language learning is complex when the syntactic structures of first and second languages differ. Several syntactic problems are related to typological variations between the first and target languages. However, according to Alghazo and Alshraideh (2020), if the grammatical features in the first and second languages are identical, second-language speakers can comprehend them the same way as native speakers. Hao et al. (2021) asserted that when specific characteristics are different from or exclusive to the second language, second-language learners cannot achieve native-like processing. Language rules could negatively affect the use of other languages and negatively influence one language toward another (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Kurniawan, 2018).

Various researchers have examined how Arab EFL students acquire English through error analysis (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Al-Sobhi et al., 2018); however, students are often passive participants in these studies, defined by categories and numbers. In my study, I aim to empower Arabic-speaking postsecondary students to participate actively in their language acquisition process by encouraging them to identify and document their own errors in English sentence structure by employing Corder's error analysis model, which students can use to revise their errors and improve their writing skills.

This learner-centered, self-directed approach helped students develop a deeper understanding of their own perceptions of learning while also facilitating the acquisition of correct sentence structure. I aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners'

perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students complete their error analyses of their own writing using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students completed their error analyses of their own writing. Xie (2019) suggested that errors made in writing by English as a second language (ESL) learners can signify deeper issues or intricate interactions that arise during language usage in various settings. Corder (1981) viewed errors as valuable information for instructors, researchers, and learners. Allowing learners to analyze their linguistic errors may help them determine the likely errors and difficulties that make them unable to communicate effectively (Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). Bukit (2020) argued that by allowing learners to examine their errors, students might identify patterns and create strategies for enhancing their language abilities. More independence and self-directed learning are fostered in the classroom through this process.

Nguyen and Terry (2017) highlighted how EFL learners utilize digital tools like Grammarly, online forums, textbooks, visual aids, and individual practice sessions to enhance their English proficiency and engagement in learning. Altun and Sabah (2020) found that employing cooperative learning strategies based on multiple intelligences enhanced EFL learners' speaking skills by integrating digital tools, group activities, and individual practices.

The basis of this study focused on gaining a better understanding of the difficulties that arise when learning English sentence structure. The study could have also helped Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners understand the nature of English sentence structure and develop proper language skills for college and career success. Allowing Arab adult EFL learners to analyze the errors made in their own writing could have offered valuable insights into their errors and provided a structured approach to identifying, describing, and understanding common errors made by Arab EFL learners (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019).

Research Questions

Trochim (2005) asserted that research design is crucial in structuring a research project, connecting all significant components to address the central research questions. A poorly formulated research question, objectives, and hypothesis can lead to the failure of a research project (Farrugia et al., 2010). For qualitative research, the research questions should articulate my interest in exploring individuals' perspectives, intentions, and experiences in social interactions or a particular event or condition (Agee, 2009).

According to Agee (2009), qualitative research questions generally aim to reveal the viewpoints of an individual or a group regarding a particular topic or phenomenon. Therefore, to better understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students completed their error analyses of their own writing, this study addressed the following questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are students' perceptions of learning English sentence structure?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments?

Conceptual Framework

Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1974) error analysis theory served as the study's conceptual frameworks. Corder introduced the concept of error analysis in the 1960s (Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020; Fauzan et al., 2020; Fauzi, 2021; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019; Karim et al., 2018; Mahmood & Murad, 2018; McDowell & Liardét, 2020; Shousha et al., 2020; Wang, 2020). Error analysis is a significant theory in second language learning that examines errors made by foreign language learners (Al-husban, 2018).

Corder (1981) defined error analysis as the examination and analysis of errors made by individuals who speak a second or foreign language. Errors are due to inadequate linguistic knowledge and cannot be self-corrected. Corder outlined error analysis into four phases: identification, description, justification, and classification. Errors are valuable because they provide evidence of learning development and feedback for instructors and learners (Al-husban, 2018; Al-Sobhi, 2019; Atmowardoyo, 2018; Damaiyanti, 2021; Dinamika & Hanafiah, 2019; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019).

Language learning difficulties and the transfer of syntactic structures from the first to the second language have been thoroughly explained using Corder's theoretical

framework for error analysis in higher education and second languages (Mahmood & Murad, 2018). Error analysis has proven its function in analyzing second language learners' errors in numerous classroom situations (Dinamika & Hanafiah, 2019). Error analysis examines errors of the negative transfer of the mother tongue and other possible sources of errors (Şahin, 2020). For example, Erdocia and Laka (2018) used the error analysis method to identify English sentence structure's most common syntactic errors.

According to Corder (1974), systemic errors must be identified to comprehend the patterns of errors. Also, error analysis explains linguistic and psychological errors to aid students in learning. Thus, incorporating Corder's theory of error analysis in this study was advantageous in understanding the difficulties encountered by Arab EFL learners at the postsecondary level when acquiring English sentence structure. In addition, error analysis can facilitate the learners' own error analyses by shedding light on the psychological factors contributing to errors in their writing.

Error analysis framework could provide students with a thorough linguistic interpretation of errors (Thyab, 2019). Error analysis can aid EFL students in understanding the root causes of their learning challenges in English (Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). Corder (1967) viewed errors as evidence of the student's natural syllabi and demonstrated how first language and second language learners create unique language systems. Corder advocated involving language learners in analyzing and categorizing their errors to enhance their second language acquisition.

This method could encourage learners to actively participate in their learning and better understand how to improve their language abilities (Bukit, 2020). By engaging in

this process, students could develop self-reflection and self-correction skills. When learners actively participate in analyzing their errors, they gain insight into their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to identify areas that require improvement (Bukit, 2020).

Selinker (1972) coined the term "interlanguage" to describe a structured L2 knowledge that differs from L1 and the target language, which emerges during the transition from L1 to L2 (Selinker, 1972). Selinker stressed that a student's language is a mixture of the first language (L1) and the target language (TL), since transfer errors are made by students using their mother tongue's sentence structure. According to interlanguage theory, learners create generalizations while they struggle with a new language. Language learners often use the rules of an interlanguage they have created as a temporary substitute to correct their errors in the target language (Frith, 1978).

Numerous studies have discovered that Arabic-speaking EFL students frequently use Arabic sentence structures when writing English (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Kazazoglu, 2020; Khatter, 2019). The proposed framework suggests that errors in second language learning may stem from the impact of the learner's first language on the target language (Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Mahmood & Murad, 2018; Yang, 2019). Selinker's theory helps EFL learners by providing a model that facilitates their academic development (Mahmood & Murad, 2018; Yang, 2019).

The interlanguage framework could assist Arab EFL students in identifying the causes of their sentence structure errors by considering factors such as first-language interference, overgeneralization, incomplete learning, communication strategies, and instructional factors (Al-Sobhi, 2019). The framework has been extensively used in

higher education and can provide valuable insights into the language learning experience of Arab EFL students (Mahmood & Murad, 2018; Yang, 2019). Understanding these factors can aid learners in comprehending their errors, improving their language skills, and overcoming difficulties, resulting in improved academic performance and language-learning success (Yang, 2019).

The error analysis and interlanguage theories were a basis for understanding Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure and understanding students' error analyses of their writing. Interviewing Arab EFL learners in postsecondary education could provide researchers with valuable insights into the learners' attitudes toward English sentence structure and their ability to analyze errors in their writing through self-reflection. By conducting interviews with postsecondary Arab EFL learners and identifying their errors at the sentence level, educators could benefit from the study by creating targeted teaching strategies that focused on the specific needs of Arabic-speaking EFL learners.

Such strategies could help these learners master the English sentence structure required to complete their English degree at an Arabian university, ultimately leading to improved language learning outcomes (Mahmood & Murad, 2018). Interviewing is suitable for collecting data since it explains interviewees' responses to the study questions, observes participants' attitudes, opinions, and experiences, and understands learners' challenges (Yeong et al., 2018).

Nature of the Study

The current study was designed using a basic qualitative research methodology. The core concept of the study aligned well with the qualitative approach, which sought to explore and understand the meaning individuals attach to a social issue (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research seeks insight into how people perceive, approach, experience, and interpret the world and specific phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This approach was consistent with my primary focus: to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students completed their error analyses of their own writing. In this qualitative study, I focused on postsecondary Arab EFL learners majoring in English at Hebron University to investigate their perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure and understand students' error analyses of their writing.

One-on-one semistructured interviews were the primary means of data collection to understand how the participants perceived learning English sentence structure. The study's problem and purpose guided the design of the interview protocols. The collected data were analyzed using Corder's (1981) error analysis procedures, as the approach was appropriate for the nature of the data. The data were coded using thematic analysis and according to the error analysis described by the students in the semi-structured interviews.

Definitions

The following terms and definitions offered clarity of interpretation for the main concepts I utilized in this qualitative study.

*Contrastive analysis (*CA*)*: The field of linguistics that analyzes and contrasts two or more languages or language systems to identify their similarities and differences is known as comparative linguistics (Al-Sobhi, 2019).

English as a foreign language (EFL): The process of learning English by people who are not native speakers in nations where English is not the major language of communication (Peng, 2019).

English as a second language (ESL): Refers to studying English in a nation where it is the predominant or official language (Peng, 2019).

Error analysis: Studies the errors made by second-language (L2) learners to understand their underlying causes (Hussain & Abdullah, 2019).

First language (L1): Native or mother tongue is the language a person has learned from birth, usually spoken in the home environment, and is considered the primary means of communication (Hasrina et al., 2018).

Foreign language: A language that is not commonly used in the learner's immediate social environment. It may be studied as part of a school curriculum or an elective, without direct practical application, or in preparation for future travel or cross-cultural communication situations (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017).

Fossilization: Selinker proposed the concept of fossilization in 1972 to characterize the lack of grammatical development in learning a second language (Gao, 2020).

Interlingual interference: Learners' native language causes interlingual errors due to L1 interference. Interlingual interference is common among second language learners when the learner's knowledge of the mother tongue interferes with learning a second language (Abdel-Fattah et al., 2018; Hassan, 2019; Kazazoglu, 2020; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Rana et al., 2019).

Intralingual interference: Refers to errors made by language learners within the rules of the target language due to incomplete understanding without any influence from their first language (Corder, 1981; Gass, 1979; James, 2013; Richards, 1971b; Selinker & Gass, 2008).

Language interference: The effect of language learners' first language on the production of the language they are learning (Fauzan et al., 2020).

Second language (L2*)*: A majority language is usually the official or dominant language required for basic needs, education, and employment. Immigrants or members often learn it from minority groups who speak a different language than their native language. (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017).

Target language (TL): A foreign language that a person intends to learn or currently learns (Rana et al., 2019).

Assumptions

I assumed that participants were forthcoming and genuine in their interview

responses for this research (Stewart, 2020). I assumed a basic qualitative research design

was the best method to solve the research problem and answer the research questions

(Stewart, 2020). Additionally, I assumed the participants accurately responded to

interview responses and provided honest expressions of their knowledge and experiences

learning English sentence structure (Stewart, 2020). Lastly, I presumed I carefully and

ethically selected the study sample, including voluntary participation and informed

consent (Stewart, 2020), and that I adequately addressed the research population's

confidential perspective regarding the accuracy of analysis and reporting (Stewart, 2020).

Scope and Delimitations

This study's scope involved investigating Arabic-speaking EFL learners'

perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure and understanding

students' error analyses of their writing. I chose this because researchers have found

English sentence structure challenging for Arab EFL learners to master because Arabic

has different sentence structures and functions differently (Shaalan et al., 2019; Thyab,

2019). The research problem, the target population, and the conceptual framework were

delimited in this study.

Improved understanding of English sentence structure learning challenges is a

major and significant issue for the entire educational community (Alhussain, 2018; Al-

Sobhi, 2019). Involving EFL learners in identifying and understanding their common

syntactic errors could help them self-correct their errors and improve their language

proficiency (Şahin, 2020). In addition, such understating could help EFL instructors and curriculum designers determine the likely syntactic errors and identify barriers preventing literacy development (Adila, 2019; Al-Sobhi, 2019; Gordon, 2021; Şahin, 2020). In this qualitative study, I focused entirely on Arabic-speaking EFL learners majoring in English at Hebron University in Palestine over one semester. This study did not represent the whole population of EFL learners in Palestinian universities.

Limitations

The study focused on a specific sample size, limited to second-year students majoring in English at Hebron University for one semester. However, further longitudinal studies on a larger scale are required to achieve generalization. In addition, it is important to examine instructors' perspectives to identify the causes of learners' writing difficulties and errors and to gain insight into how instructors use error analysis to monitor student learning. Finally, it only considered second-year English majors, which hindered its ability to be applied to students from different academic majors who faced unique writing challenges and errors, thereby limiting its generalizability.

Significance

Learners must be well-written communicators and understand the importance of good writing skills (Defazio et al., 2010). Communicating well requires linguistic and communicative competence (Abdoualzhraa et al., 2018). Arab professionals who struggle with grammar and the English language may be prevented from professional positions

(Alasfour, 2018). Effective writing and speaking are essential professional abilities across all professions and business sectors across the globe (Lee & Schmidgall, 2020).

Researchers have investigated the Arabic-to-English learning process through error analysis (Alahmadi, 2014). This qualitative research study contributed to the identified research on existing social challenges for students trying to achieve proficiency in English. My research contributed to postsecondary and adult language learning by addressing Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing.

This study had the potential to narrow the existing research gap in this area and expand our understanding of effective language-learning strategies for adults. My study allowed students to actively learn correct sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis. Understanding the nature of sentence structure errors could help adult EFL learners correct their errors themselves (Atmowardoyo, 2018).

The findings could contribute to positive social change by giving students a deeper understanding of syntactic errors in sentence structure, enhancing students' readiness for college and careers, and helping students master syntactic structure in English sentences. Engaging students in the error analysis process made learning a language more effective and efficient because it promoted active involvement, critical thinking, and self-reflection (Bukit, 2020).

Summary

One of the learning challenges in writing for Arabic-speaking EFL learners is mastering English sentence structure (Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Qasem, 2020). Arab adult EFL learners struggle to master English sentence structure because Arabic and English have different syntactic structures (Thyab, 2019). Compared to Arabic, English has a contrasting linguistic system. Arabic is known for its rich morphology and flexible or free word order structure (Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Qasem, 2020; Shalhoub-Awwad, 2020).

This basic qualitative study aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students complete their error analyses of their own writing. In 1974, Corder recognized error analysis as an important aspect of applied linguistics. Corder utilized this approach to identify and interpret unacceptable forms generated by EFL learners. Error analysis research is still widely employed for its practical benefits in teaching and learning contexts. Self-correction is emphasized in error analysis research as it allows learners to comprehend the causes of their errors and develop strategies to correct them. This process enables learners to become responsible for their own learning and improve their language proficiency (Karim et al., 2018; Şahin, 2020; Xie, 2019).

In Chapter 1, I introduced the research topic focused on the challenges of learning English sentence structure as one crucial tool required for most EFL learners for academic success. I also discussed the appropriateness of using the error analysis approach in the qualitative research study to allow students to examine their syntactic

errors in sentence structure. Further, Chapter 1 featured a background discussion

regarding the research topic and conceptual framework for the study using Selinker's

(1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1974) error analysis theory.

In Chapter 1, I also discussed the research problem of why Arabic-speaking EFL

learners studying English at an Arabian university struggle to learn English sentence

structure for written assignments. Identifying areas that require improvement in the

English language learning process could benefit Arab EFL learners in preparing for

college and careers. Lastly, I emphasized the significance of the study and how error

analysis can assist language learners in recognizing the roots of their errors and acquiring

techniques to rectify them. This process could lead to more self-directed learning and

advancement in language proficiency.

Chapter 2 introduced the literature review as the foundation for this study by

reviewing the relevant literature and discussing the research gap. The gap was a lack of

research on understanding Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners in learning

English sentence structure (Erdocia & Laka, 2018; Hashim et al., 2021). In several

studies, students were often passive participants in these studies, defined by categories

and numbers. My study allowed students to have an active role in learning correct

sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a

traditional model of Corder's error analysis. I also discussed expanding the conceptual

framework for the current study, which I discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 outlined the qualitative methodology used in this study, including the

research design and methods employed. Ethical considerations of the research were also

discussed. Chapter 4 presented the study's findings and discusses data collection and analysis. Results were organized according to themes and research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 included interpretation of the research findings with the research questions. It also discussed any limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and the implications for positive social change that migh result from the research results.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was that Arabic-speaking EFL learners studying English at an Arabian university struggled to learn English sentence structure for written assignments. The sentence is the largest unit in any language (Humboldt, 1998). This basic qualitative study aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. Students actively reviewed their written work to identify errors and make corrections during this process.

This practice could have given learners a deeper understanding of English sentence structure and highlighted the areas they needed to improve (Bukit, 2020; Dyah Nirmala Sani & Rosnawati, 2022; Tarone, 2012). I employed the Corder error analysis model to guide students in analyzing their writing errors. This model was a well-established framework for identifying and categorizing language errors. The order error analysis model could provide a structured approach for learners to identify patterns in their language use and improve their language skills (Al-Sobhi, 2019).

Mastering English sentence structure is challenging for Arab adult EFL learners (Al-Khresheh, 2010; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). For example, Arab EFL learners have struggled to master subject-verb agreement rules (Alduais, 2012). Yet, sentence structure is one crucial tool for English as a second language (FLL) learners to succeed in writing (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Nasser, 2020). In addition, understanding syntax requires organizing words into sentences; disagreement is a syntactic error (Abdoualzhraa et al., 2018).

ESL learners often find syntax complexity one of English's most challenging structural elements (Abdoualzhraa et al., 2018; Ngangbam, 2016). Arabic and English have basic sentence structures, although their word order varies. While Arabic word order can be flexible, English word order is rigid, which presents difficulties for Arab EFL learners (Alduais, 2012). According to Noor's (1996) literature review on English syntactic structure processing by Arabic-speaking learners, these learners use strategies similar to those of L1 learners, such as simplification and overgeneralization.

Arab EFL learners often use Arabic structures when writing English because Arabic and English have different sentence patterns (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Khatter, 2019). According to Hamed (2018), the influence of the native language is the most common source of syntactic errors. Researchers have emphasized the mother tongue's crucial role in the processes of a second language (Brown, 2000; Corder, 1974; Gass, 1979; Noor, 1996; Selinker, 1972).

Scholars in error analysis have stressed the significance of second-language learners' errors (Brown, 2000; Corder, 1981; Richards, 1971b; Selinker, 1974). The study of errors adult language learners make as they attempt to master a second language has drawn more attention in recent years (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012). For the current study, enhanced comprehension of English sentence structure was essential as learners' ability to analyze, identify, and learn from their errors was crucial in language learning (Khatter, 2019). Self-correction is important in language learning as it could improve language proficiency and create a more effective learning environment (Abdoualzhraa et al., 2018).

Researchers have demonstrated that self-correction could narrow the gap in academic performance between language learners and enhance language competence. Furthermore, it enables learners to self-correct their syntactic mistakes, enhancing their comprehension and proficiency in the target language. Establishing a learning atmosphere that promotes self-correction is crucial for learners to recognize and learn from their errors (Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020; Khatter, 2019; Abdoualzhraa et al., 2018; Ngangbam, 2016).

I aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. This study could have helped Arab EFL learners improve their understanding of English sentence errors, enhance sentence structure, and be better prepared for academic and professional pursuits, resulting in personal and professional growth opportunities.

Analyzing self-errors helped students identify and learn from their errors, leading to improved language proficiency and a more equitable learning environment. In addition, by recognizing common sentence structure errors, students could receive targeted instruction from their instructors and close the achievement gap between learners (Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020). Error analysis allows educators to effectively teach a rule in the target language by providing them with relevant information (Corder, 1974).

The literature review section of this study started by exploring the theoretical framework of the research, followed by an analysis of the syntactic variations between Arabic and English to enhance the comprehension of syntactic errors. Next, I summarized

relevant gaps in the reviewed literature and discussed how this research improves the understanding of sentence structure errors produced by Arabic-speaking EFL learners. I also outlined the importance of involving students in analyzing their errors as it could enhance students' metacognitive development, language proficiency, and learning environment. Next, I provided a more thorough overview of Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1974) error analysis theory. Finally, I finished the chapter with a summary that provided an overview of the key ideas and connections at the start of the next.

Literature Search Strategy

To locate relevant and appropriate literature, I used the following search terms in various combinations: *English and Arabic word order structure, Arabic and English sentence structure, Arab EFL learners, language interference, error analysis, interlanguage theory, interlingual and intralingual errors, positive and negative transfers*, and *syntactic errors*. The search terms were used in library databases such as Academic Search Complete, EBSCO Host, Education Source, ERIC, Sage Premier, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Science Direct, Awej, and ProQuest. I limited my search to peer-reviewed scholarly sources published between 2018 and 2022, with a few significant exceptions.

Conceptual Framework

I considered the following conceptual framework for the study's purpose: Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1974) error analysis theory. The framework's purpose was to develop a more thorough understanding of the lived

experiences of postsecondary Arab EFL learners to understand their perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. Contrastive and error analysis are commonly recognized branches of applied linguistics science (Khansir, 2012). The contrastive analysis method focuses on contrasting and comparing two language systems.

In the 1950s, the contrastive method was developed by researchers such as Charles Fries, Edward Sapir, Charles Hockett, and Burrhus Skinner (AL-Sobhi, 2019). Fries utilized the contrastive analysis technique to address the issue of interference between learners' native language and the target language, which leads to errors. Lado and Fries suggested that identifying differences between the two languages could aid in predicting and preventing these errors (as cited in González & Martínez, 2020).

However, Al-Khresheh (2016) has criticized contrastive analysis for its limited ability to fully describe second language (L2) errors, as it only considers the differences in the structure of the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). Al-Khreshe pointed out that errors in acquiring a second language can arise from factors beyond L1 interference, which need to be accounted for by contrastive analysis.

During the 1970s, contrastive analysis began to decline as research showed that many second language (L2) errors did not result from interference (Noor, 1996). To address the limitations of contrastive analysis, second-language scholars reconsidered different methods for examining language learners' errors (Keshavarz, 2011). The emergence of error analysis as a reform movement in the field of applied linguistics dates

to the late 1960s and 1970s, which was the outcome of the empirical research conducted by Corder (1973), Selinker (1972), and Richards (1971b).

Corder (1974) acknowledged error analysis as one of the most crucial concepts in second-language acquisition during the 1960s. Corder highlighted that errors were an essential part of the study of language acquisition. According to Corder (1974), an error is not just a performance error but a systematic defect resulting from a learner's lack of linguistic competence.

Corder (1967) noted that the language of second-language learners' errors is systematic and that learner errors are not random mistakes but evidence of rule-governed behavior. Error analysis informs instructors of student progress and provides me with language learning evidence (Corder, 1981). Corder (1981) expanded the scope of error analysis by attributing errors to interference from the first language and intralingual errors resulting from a learner's inadequate understanding of the target language and using communication strategies or overgeneralization. Additionally, Corder (1981) distinguished between errors and mistakes, where errors are caused by the lack of linguistic competence and interference from the first language, while mistakes such as lack of attention, fatigue, and carelessness arise from performance.

In 1977, Schachter and Celce-Murciav criticized error analysis because it does not capture all foreign language learners' errors because students frequently skip L2 items they are unsure of. Selinker and Gass (2008) also criticized the error analysis approach for focusing on sentences with errors while ignoring sentences without errors. Then, in the 1970s, linguist Larry Selinker (1972; Selinker et al., 1975) introduced the

interlanguage theory. Al-Sobhi (2019) noted that the interlanguage theory is distinct from contrastive linguistics and error analysis because it does not directly compare the learner's native and target languages. Instead, the theory suggests that learners create a third language, which differs from L1 and L2.

Selinker (1972) proposed that interlanguage is a different linguistic system that arises from a learner's attempts to produce the target language. This results in a hybrid language that combines elements of the learner's first language with the target language, as learners transfer errors related to the sentences of their mother tongue. Tarone (2012) stated that the interlanguage hypothesis proposes a systematic approach to adult language learners' attempt to communicate effectively in a foreign language.

This process includes a systematic approach to all language levels, such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, rather than just a random occurrence of errors. In addition, Selinker (1972) identified positive and negative interlingual transfer and intralingual factors, such as learning context, second-language learning strategies, overgeneralization, and communication strategies, as sources of errors in interlanguage.

Error analysis has been recently revived following many researchers' significant contributions to the error analysis framework (Al-Khresheh, 2016). Those early researchers demonstrated the validity of the error analysis theory in explaining various foreign language learners' errors, including syntactic, grammatical, and phonological errors (Al-Khresheh, 2016). Corder's theoretical framework of error analysis has been

used extensively in second-language learning and higher education to explain linguistic errors and areas of challenge for students (Mahmood & Murad, 2018)

Allowing Arab EFL learners to examine their common errors in sentence structure through error analysis was necessary to understand their challenges in learning English sentence structure. Employing Corder's error analysis theory was deemed appropriate for this study because error analysis helped to explore, investigate, and analyze such errors (Şahin, 2020). Al-Khresheh (2010) proved the importance of error analysis in investigating types of word order errors within a simple sentence structure. AbiSamra (2003) employed the error analysis approach to examine different grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and lexical errors for Arab EFL learners.

The interlingual theory was appropriate for this qualitative study because Selinker's conceptual framework work has provided a model for identifying reasons for the learners' syntactic errors to improve the learning-teaching process (AbiSamra, 2003; Al-Sobhi, 2019). Selinker's conceptual framework has been used extensively in postsecondary higher education and provides a model to facilitate academic development for EFL learners (Yang & Xu, 2019). Empowering students to analyze their errors, understand their underlying causes, and proactively adapt their learning methods and materials could lead to more successful learning outcomes in second language acquisition. This approach allowed learners to gain insights into their learning processes, develop a deeper understanding of the target language, and adapt their learning strategies over time (Tarone, 2012).

The interlanguage theory made a noteworthy contribution to our comprehension of the internal elements that impacted language acquisition, specifically the transfer of language, the tendency to overuse rules of the target language, communication, and learning strategies (González & Martínez, 2020). In addition, error analysis based on interlanguage has demonstrated its effectiveness in researching the acquisition of a second language (Selinker,1972). However, Truscott and Smith (2019) emphasized Selinker's claim that adult and teenage language acquisition requires an entirely new theoretical framework compared to the one used to study language acquisition in children.

Literature Review

The literature review focused on the differences in sentence structure between Arabic and English. I investigated how Arabic-speaking learners of English as a foreign language made errors while learning this structure by examining the research conducted in this area. Additionally, I comprehensively explained interlanguage and error analysis theories, outlining the benefits of error analysis for language teachers, learners, and researchers. I explored the origins and causes of syntactic errors and distinguished between errors and mistakes based on the research conducted by various linguists and applied linguistics researchers. I also stressed the importance of a learner-centered teaching approach, which encouraged students to actively analyze their errors, reflect on their learning, and collaborate with peers to construct their knowledge, enabling them to take responsibility for their learning.

Sentence Structure

Researchers discovered conditioning and conjunctions to be shared syntactic elements between Arabic and English (Adila, 2019; Amiri & Puteh, 2017; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). The syntactic similarities make learning easy for Arab EFL learners. For example, Arab students can produce correct sentences using *and, but*, and *so* that have the same meaning when they transfer it literally in English (Momani & Altaher, 2015). However, despite similarities between English and Arabic, there are notable differences in syntax, such as variations in sentence structure, word order, subject-verb agreement, and other factors (Adila, 2019; Alhussain, 2018; Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020). Arabic and English also use different writing systems, with Arabic written from right to left and English written from left to right. Furthermore, Arabic has 28 letters, while English has only 26 (Alduais, 2012).

Scholars have verified that English and Arabic have different linguistic structures because English belongs to the Indo-European language family, while Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family, which has rich morphology and flexible word order (Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Qasem, 2020; Shalhoub-Awwad, 2020; Souadkia, 2017). Arabic has a free word order structure and can adopt the word order of a verb-subject-object or subject-verb-object, as seen in Figure 2 (Adila, 2019; Alhussain, 2018; Hamed, 2018), while English follows a fixed subject-verb-object word order structure (Adila, 2019; Alhussain, 2018; AlQahtani, 2021; Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020; Jarrah & Abusalim, 2021; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Souadkia, 2017; Yaseen et al., 2018).

Figure 2

Arabic/English Sentence Structure

English:	Ahmad drinks milk	English:	Drink Ahmad milk
Arabic:	Ahmad yashrab alhalib	Arabic:	yaishrab Ahmad alhalib
Structure:	S + V + O	Structure:	V + S + O

Arabic sentences could express a full meaning without a verb (Al-Muhtaseb & Mellish,1998). However, a simple English sentence is an entire unit of meaning when it only contains a subject and a verb that make up the meaning (Souadkia, 2017). However, Arabic sentences are long with complex syntax and divided into nominal and verbal sentences (Alhussain, 2108; Fakih & Al-Sharif, 2017; Shaalan et al., 2019; Yaseen et al., 2018).

Nominal sentences begin with a noun phrase, noun, or pronoun, as in *ahmad yashrab alma2*, translated to English as *Ahmad drinks water*. In contrast, verbal sentences begin with a verb only, as in, *yaishrab Ahmad alma2,* translated to English as *Drink Ahmad water (*Shaalan et al., 2019). Arabic nominal sentences include subject and predicate. However, the nominal clauses in Arabic do not have *copular–be* (Yaseen et al., 2018). Yaseen et al. (2018) have explained that English typically employs verbal sentences that require a verb to be present. Therefore, the nominal Arabic sentence "*Adam madaris*" can only be translated into English by adding a verb. For instance, it can be translated as "*Adam is a teacher*."

Arabic verbal sentence refers to an action or event; unlike English, Arabic has a free word order system that enables us to relocate the verb in a verbal sentence to the

beginning without changing its meaning and maintaining grammatical correctness (Alhussain, 2018). As a result, Arabic-speaking EFL learners have difficulty learning English grammar and syntax and transferring sentences from Arabic into English in the same order, neglecting English grammar and syntax (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Shaalan et al., 2019; Yaseen et al., 2018).

Subject-Verb Agreement

Shaalan et al. (2019) have stated that agreement is a crucial syntactic principle that influences the construction of Arabic sentences. Arabic has a system of morphology that differs from English and other Indo-European languages (Adila, 2019; Alasmari et al., 2018; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Hamed, 2018; Igaab & Altai, 2018; Igaab & Tarrad, 2019). Regarding the agreement, Arabic verbs must show agreement with subjects in person, number, and gender (Adila, 2019; Alasmari et al., 2018; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Hamed, 2018; Igaab & Altai,2018; Igaab & Tarrad, 2019).

According to Akan et al. (2019), unlike Arabic, English has no grammatical genders, e.g., "معلم" / "mualli**m**" (a male teacher*)* versus ''معلمة" / "muallimah"/ (a female teacher). English has two types of numbers—singular (i.e., a teacher) versus plural (i.e., teachers). Arabic has three types of numbers—singular "'معلم" / "muallim" / (i.e., a teacher), dual ''معلمان" / "mualliman" / (i.e., two teachers) and plural ''معلمون/ ''muallimun''/ (i.e., teachers). Arabic and English have three kinds of persons: first, second, and third, and they should agree with the subject in person, as shown in Table 1 (Yaseen et al., 2018).

Table 1

Arabic Subject/Verb Agreement Rule

Verb	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
جلس – يجلس	أجلس	تجلس	يجلس
jalasa-yajlisu	ajlisu	tajlisu	yajlisu
To sit	I sit	You sit	He sits

Several scholars examined subject-verb agreement challenges to better understand common sentence structure errors and the causes of these syntactic errors (AbiSmara, 2003; Akan et al., 2019; Yaseen et al., 2018). The primary source of errors in sentence construction for Arabic-speaking learners of English is the differences in subject-verb agreement rules between the two languages (Adila, 2019; Alhussain, 2018; AlQahtani, 2021; Ghomri & Souadkia, 2020; Jarrah & Abusalim, 2021; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Souadkia, 2017; Yaseen et al., 2018).

For example, distinguishing between singular and plural forms for Arab EFL learners is a struggle compared to Arabic. Several English words' singular and plural forms are the same; *physics, mathematics,* and *statistics* are among the examples. Arab EFL students have difficulty distinguishing which nouns are plural and which are singular because they are plural in Arabic but singular in English (Dinamika & Hanafiah, 2019; Fauzan et al., 2020; Thyab, 2019).

Verbs

Arabic has simple verb forms: past (perfect), present (imperfect), and future. Arabic past tense also refers to completed action or action in the past. The Arabic past tense is similar to the English past tense and past perfect (Adilia, 2019; Akan et al., 2019; Breedlov, 2017; Khatter, 2019; Mudhsh, 2021). The present tense in Arabic is general

and may refer to incomplete, ongoing actions. Arabic present corresponds with the English present and present continuous tense; however, Arabic does not distinguish between present and present continuous tense (Alzahrani, 2020; Hafiz et al., 2018).

Because Arabic lacks the progressive and perfective tenses found in English, Arab EFL students tend to either omit the progressive morpheme [-ing] or drop the auxiliary verb due to a negative transfer from Arabic (Akan et al., 2019). Arabic uses the past simple instead of the English past progressive. The progressive present perfect tense is not used in Arabic. Arab EFL students are likelier to employ the simple present than the present perfect progressive (Alzahrani, 2020).

In contrast to English, Arabic lacks model verbs; the verb "*to b*e" is not utilized in the present tense, and the auxiliary "*do"* is also absent. This discrepancy can result in syntactic errors, such as saying "*I boy*" instead of "*I am a boy*" (Lghzeel & Radzuan, 2020). Additionally, Arab EFL learners struggle to grasp the English passive voice because it is not as commonly used in Arabic and lacks auxiliary verbs. As an example, an Arab EFL learner may write "*The apple eaten*" instead of "*The apple was eaten*" (Alasfour, 2018).

Adverbs

Researchers affirmed that adverbs are essential for creating sentences to enhance meaning (Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Owais & Taani, 2022; Yagcioglu, 2018). However, Arabic's grammatical structures are more flexible and varied than English's, affecting how adverbs and adverbials are translated between these two languages (Khalil, 2021). The adverb position in Arabic is flexible because the Arabic language is a free word

order structure language. Arabic adverbs show meaning depending on where adverbs occur (Owais & Taani, 2022).

According to Alasfour (2018), English employs adverbs and adverbial constructions more frequently than Arabic. However, unlike English, Arabic lacks consistent morphological and syntactic features that define *adverbs* as a distinct category. Noun-derived Arabic adverbs differ in usage and placement from English adverbs, making it challenging for Arab EFL learners (Khalil, 2021). Nevertheless, Owais and Taan (2022) have shown that the positioning of manner adverbs in sentence construction is nearly identical in English and Arabic, as depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Arabic and English Manner Adverb Position

English: <u>The boy is driving the car</u> *slowly.* **Arabic:** <u>al walaad yaqood al sayara</u> *boto'a*
S+V+O → ADV   S+V+O → ADV
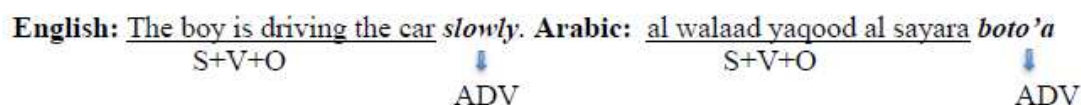
Adjectives

Adjectives are the critical parts of sentences because adjectives provide different meanings to our sentences (Yagcioglu, 2018). In contrast to English, Arabic adjective structure follows the noun, and there are no set norms for adjective order, as illustrated in Figure 4 (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Quran, 2020; Kachakeche & Scontras, 2020; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Qasem, 2020).

Figure 4

Arabic Versus English Adjective Order Structure

English Sentence	Arabic Sentence
They live in a *beautiful* house. ⬇	*yaeishun fi manzil jamil* ⬇ ⬇
Adjective	Noun Adjective

In Arabic, adjectives are words with no distinctive morphological shape and function as proper nouns in specific syntactic contexts, such as Amīn and Karīm, which literally mean honest and generous in English. English adjectives are a part of speech representing a definite substance's meaning (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Quran, 2020; Alshraideh, 2020; Hafiz et al., 2018; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020).

Arabic predicate adjectives are always indefinite and agree with gender, case, and number nouns. In contrast, English requires a verb to link the subject and the predicate, and adjectives do not have to agree with the nouns they modify in number, case, or gender (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021). In addition, Arabic lacks an explicit copula or present tense that connects the subject and the predicate, as in the sentence *lbaytu nadfun, the home clean (*Al-Quran, 2020).

Researchers examined adjective word order errors and discovered that Arab adult EFL learners often make word order errors because Arabic and English have different adjective order structures (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018). El Shaban (2017) found that Arab adult EFL learners struggled with selecting the proper adjectival order because Arabic

adjectives follow the noun it modifies; however, in English, an adjective precedes the associated noun. For example, Arab EFL learners tend to write *girl tall* instead of *tall girl* due to the differences in adjective word orders (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020). Therefore, understanding syntax and semantics is essential, and any disagreement with grammar rules results in grammatical or syntax errors (Farooq, 2019).

Nouns

Nouns are a significant part of any language (Ahammad, 2017). A noun is a word used to refer to people, animals, objects, substances, states, events, and feelings. Nouns can be a subject or an object of a verb, be modified by an adjective, and take an article or determine (Hashim, 2016). The noun in English means the name of a person, place, or thing. However, in Arabic, nouns include pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and interjections (Ahammad, 2017). Although, unlike Arabic, English nouns differ in categories, morphological studies have revealed that both English and Arabic nouns have similarities that have brought the two languages close to linguistic research (Ahammad, 2017).

Salim (2013) pointed out that although Arabic and English have different grammatical structures, the two languages have a certain morphological similarity. One such similarity is the ability to add suffixes to nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Furthermore, both languages inflect nouns for case, number, gender, and person. However, English nouns differ from Arabic nouns because they only have singular and plural number distinctions. However, Hashim (2016) discovered that the Arabic derivational system is more complex than English, which may pose some challenges for Arab EFL learners. For example, English has three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter; however, Arabic

has only two genders: masculine and feminine (Salim, 2013). Due to these syntactic differences, singular/plural markers, prepositions, articles, pronouns, and word order are common areas where Arab EFL learners make syntactic errors (Ridha, 2012).

Mechanics of Writing

Writing mechanics is a subskill that includes punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, acronyms, and numbers (Naeem, 2007). Mechanics is putting words into print, including spelling, grammar, and punctuation (Smith, 2003). However, Warriner (1982) argued that writing mechanics include capitalization, punctuation, and manuscript form (as cited in Naeem, 2007). Nunan claimed that writing involves mastering a grammatical system to convey one's intended meaning (as cited in Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017).

Writing is hard for both native and non-native speakers because it requires mastering multiple standards, such as vocabulary, structure, audience, and mechanics like punctuation and spelling. To become proficient writers, learners need to develop a range of skills and strategies to communicate their ideas in writing effectively. Researchers have shown that college EFL learners face punctuation, spelling, and grammar as the most common mechanical problems (Altakhaineh & Al-Jallad, 2018).

Knowledge of writing mechanics is a significant aspect of writing composition for EFL learners to produce a well-written essay through compliance with the rules of punctuation and grammar conventions (Altakhaineh & Al-Jallad, 2018; Baleghizadeh & Gordani, 2012). Teachers reported that correct grammar and mechanics are essential for writing instruction and quality (Allen et al., 2014). Nunan asserted that writing

successfully involves mastering conventions of mechanics of letter formation, spelling, and punctuation (as cited in Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017).

Spelling

Spelling is writing a word or words with all necessary letters and diacritics present in an accepted, conventional order. It is also one of the elements of orthography and a prescriptive element of language (Naeem, 2007). The acquisition of spelling skills is typically more difficult than the acquisition of reading skills in most orthographic writing systems that use an alphabet (Bosman & Van Orden, 1997). For English language learners, mastering spelling is a crucial skill to develop (Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017).

This difficulty may stem from the differences between English and Arabic orthographies, including the different letter sounds and combinations, spelling rules, and pronunciation (Aloglah, 2018; Alharbi, 2018). Arab EFL learners may also encounter difficulties with silent letters and homophones in English spelling (Albesher, 2018). Some English words are borrowed from other languages and may not follow typical English spelling patterns, further complicating spelling acquisition (Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017).

Researchers traced the reasons for spelling challenges for Arab EFL learners and found that syntactic differences between Arabic and English create significant challenges in learning English spelling (Albesher, 2018; Al-Mudhi, 2019; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Omer, 2018; Şahin, 2020). One of the challenges is that Arabic has pronunciation-based spelling, while English does not (Albesher, 2018; Al-Mudhi, 2019; Al-Seghayer, 2019;

Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Omer, 2018; Şahin, 2020). English is read from left to right; Arabic is written in cursive and from right to left. Most letters in Arabic are connected and have different shapes depending on their position within a word (Albesher, 2018; Al-Mudhi, 2019; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Omer, 2018; Şahin, 2020).

Arabic is a dominantly consonantal orthography comprising 28 letters in a non-Roman script (Al-Seghayer, 2019). English has more vowels than Arabic; however, there is no need to write short vowels in Arabic (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Khatter, 2019; Souadkia, 2017). Instead, one could identify short vowels in Arabic through case markers or diacritics (Al-Seghayer, 2019). Three central vowels in Arabic may be lengthened or shortened: /a:/, /I:/, and /u:/.

However, Arabic does not have the English vowel /e/ or /ɑ:/. Therefore, when pronouncing words that contain the following vowels: *will (well), *hilthy" (healthy), *beast (best),* and *miss (mess),* Arab EFL students frequently employ alternative vowels (Aloglah, 2018). Arab EFL students struggle to process phonemes not found in Arabic. For example, the absence of consonants in English phonemes (*/p/, /v/, /t ʃ, as in **ch**eese /3, as in ca**su**al*) is problematic to Arab EFL learners because these English phonemes do not exist in Arabic. The absence leads to pronunciation-based substitution errors.

Unlike in English, consonant clusters are uncommon in Arabic. Arab EFL learners insert vowels to facilitate pronunciation. For example, Arab EFL learners compose vowel-addition spelling errors, such as the letter *E* in *belonges* and the insertion of the letter *U* in *multipule* (Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019). The texts in Arabic and

English are different. Pronunciation-based errors result from differences between how words are pronounced and written (Aloglah, 2018).

Arabic has a traditional spelling method depending on how words are pronounced, but English is arbitrary. For example, the Arabic pronunciation of English words borrowed from Arabic poses a challenge for Arab EFL learners, such as 'badawin' instead of 'Bedouin' and 'gaza' instead of 'gazelle,' or words borrowed from English, such as 'bas' instead of 'bus' (Albesher, 2018).

Arabic phonemes (spoken sounds) and graphemes correlate precisely (written symbols). Arabic lacks double letters, silent characters, and consonant and vowel digraphs (Al-Seghayer, 2019). Arab EFL students frequently commit pronunciation-based spelling errors, such as omitting the silent letter *K* in the word *knife, nife,* and substituting the letter *S'* fo*r Z* in writing the word *busy,* following the word's pronunciation/ *ˈbɪz. i/, bezy* (Albesher, 2018; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Omer, 2018).

Articles

The English article system can be challenging for non-native speakers to master, especially for those whose native languages do not have articles or use them differently. The English language has two types of articles: definite and indefinite, and their usage depends on the context of the sentence. EFL learners may struggle with determining when to use "a" or "a" for indefinite articles and "the" for definite articles (Elumalai, 2019). However, as Burt (1975) suggested, EFL learners can still communicate complex

ideas despite errors in article usage. It is important to note that making errors in article usage does not necessarily impede the overall communication of ideas.

Nonetheless, EFL learners must continue practicing and improving their article usage skills to communicate more effectively in English. The Arabic article system has only one definite article, "al," literally in English. For example, "*al*-Qamar," "the moon," "*al*-madrasah*,*" and *"the school." In Arabic, abstract nouns are preceded by the definite article *al = the*. English does not add a definite article before the abstract word (Khatter, 2019**).**

Indefinite and definite articles are part of English language syntax. For example, the indefinite articles in English are *a,* used before consonants, and *an*, used before vowels (Alasfour, 2018; Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Qadi, 2017; Alsager et al., 2020). Arab adult EFL learners often experience challenges using English articles due to the nonexistence of indefinite articles in Arabic (Qasem, 2020). Arabic EFL learners tend to use the definite article "the" inappropriately or omit the indefinite article altogether because of the influence of the Arabic language (Al-Qadi, 2017; Thyab, 2019).

Punctuation

Punctuation is crucial for conveying the intended meaning of written texts to readers (Nouri & Marzban, 2018). Punctuation marks are divided into internal and end marks. End marks are used at the end of a sentence or a question. Internal marks are used within the sentence (Naeem, 2007). Each sentence structure has its pattern and is influenced by grammatical construction, punctuation, and connectors (Hendrawati, 2018).

English and Arabic share essential punctuation marks like periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation marks. However, English and Arabic have vastly different punctuation systems. For example, unlike Arabic, English uses titular contractions, abbreviations, and acronyms (Al-Huraithi, 2021). In contrast to English, Arabic punctuation is simpler and less restrictive; as a result, learners make many mistakes in English punctuation (Alasmri & Kruger,2 018; AlTameemy & Daradkeh, 2019; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Azmi et al., 2019; Khatter, 2019).

The English language relies heavily on a robust punctuation system to indicate the connections between different pieces of information. In contrast, Arabic punctuation rules are more flexible and less strict than English (Alasmri & Kruger, 2018; Al-Huraithi, 2021; Al-Mudhi, 2019; Al-Seghayer, 2019). For example, the English language uses commas as punctuation. However, Arabic uses words rather than punctuation marks; Arabic substitutes the commas with the conjunction (*wa), waw*, which is equivalent to *and* in English. For instance, the following sentence is punctuated in Arabic as *zirt alyunan **wa**kanda **wa**lyaban* and in English as I visited Greece, Canada, and Japan (Azmi et al., 2019).

Arabic and English use quotation marks and parentheses; however, apostrophes and semicolons are rarely used in Arabic. Arabic includes longer sentences because the punctuation marks are unnecessary; however, English sentences are shorter, and punctuation is a significant feature in its written form (Al-Huraithi, 2021; Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Al-Mudhi, 2019; Altheneyan & Boayrid, 2019; Hamed, 2018; Khatter, 2019; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020). It is common to use only one or two full stops in one

paragraph and separate sentences using commas in Arabic; however, a full stop after a complete sentence is necessary for English (Al-Huraithi, 2021). According to Al-Seghayer (2019), Arab learners of English as a foreign language often mistake the comma for the full stop, as demonstrated by the following example: "It is not the same as the other jobs[,] people only work[.]"

Capitalization

Capitalization is a minor aspect of English writing involving capital and lowercase letters following English conventions (Siddiqui, 2015). Capital letters are punctuation that helps a reader follow a text (Naeem, 2007). Writers use capitalization to convey various attitudes and emotions (Siddiqui, 2015). Capitalization is essential to read the text easily in English writing. English uses capital letters for proper nouns (countries, lakes, etc.). Researchers affirmed that capitalization does not exist in Arabic, and there is no difference between upper- and lower-case letters in Arabic (Alenazi et al., 2021; Al-Seghayer, 2019; Kazazoglu, 2020; Khatter, 2019; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Nasser, 2018; Qasem, 2020).

The absence of capitalization rules in the Arabic language leads Arab EFL students to make errors in the capitalization rules (Alenazi et al., 2021; Al-Seghayer,2019; Kazazoglu, 2020; Khatter, 2019; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020). For example, Hamed (2018) found Arab EFL learners miscapitalize proper names, such as **james (James), b*enghazi (Benghazi), *libya' (Libya),* and **africa (Africa).* Kazazoglu (2020) confirmed the earlier findings and discovered that Arab EFL students incorrectly capitalized the first letter of sentences and the names of nations, people, and places.

Capitalization errors are common among English language learners, particularly those whose first language is Arabic. The differences in the writing systems between English and Arabic and the distinction between uppercase and lowercase characters can contribute to these errors.

Effectiveness of Learner-Centered Teaching

Recent research has replicated earlier findings that Arabic-speaking students of English tend to rely on their native Arabic sentence structures when communicating in English (Abi Samra, 2003; Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Farooq, 2019; Khatter, 2019). However, limited research has investigated how these students utilize their dominant language's sentence structure without recognizing errors during learning. This study emphasizes the importance of active student involvement in error correction, utilizing the Corder error analysis guide to promote students' autonomy, motivation, and error-self-correction.

Despite the partnership between error correction and the EFL learners, research evidence has suggested that instructors' error correction may not be effective in advancing the learner to compose correctly in the target language (Oladejo,1993). Teaching theorists and researchers believe we should involve our students in deeper learning (Hernández & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Most methods are learner-centered nowadays, and students are expected not to be passive participants (Ganji, 2009).

Active engagement is a crucial element of the learning process (Ganji, 2009; Hernández & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Oladejo (1993) reported that 61% of students preferred to receive feedback on their errors and cues for self-correction. Many studies

have shown that learning is most effective when learners are actively engaged in the learning process (Ahmed & Dakhiel, 2019). For instance, technology tools like tablets and apps enhance English language learning for ELLs through self-efficient and self-directed learning and offer effective instructional methods supported by research such as the comprehensive input theory (Diallo, 2014).

When it comes to language learning, learners can correct their mistakes with the help of teachers or peers who provide them with feedback and guidance. In addition, correcting errors can activate learners' linguistic competence (Makino, 1993).

According to Conwell and Catherine (1998), cooperative learning improves students' perspectives and raises their self-esteem, academic accomplishment, and thoughts (as cited in Ahmed & Dakhiel, 2019). Ganji (2009) argued that students' active involvement in the self-correction process could have a lasting effect on their memory by activating the operations necessary for long-term retention. According to Oladejo (1993), multiple researchers (Wingfield, 1975; Raven, 1973; Cohen, 1975; Witbeck, 1976) suggested that self-correction and peer correction should be encouraged to complement the teacher's role in error correction.

Cohen (1975) believed peer correction is very helpful in the ESL classroom and suggested that this approach would help the learners recognize errors and focus more on grammatical rather than lexical errors (as cited in Oladejo, 1993). However, according to Ganji (2009), although peer and self-correction have solid theoretical and empirical support, there are still questions about the learners' capacity to help each other solve

linguistic problems in their text. Students are not knowledgeable enough to detect and correct errors in the target language.

Review of Previous Related Studies

This section delved into various research studies that employed error analysis to improve learning outcomes. These included studies where students assessed their errors to enhance understanding and studies where researchers analyzed student errors to pinpoint learning difficulties. Examining studies where students and researchers analyzed student errors provided a more thorough comprehension of students' learning hurdles and how learners' active involvement in error analysis could yield better learning outcomes.

According to multiple researchers, error analysis is an applied linguistics subfield that examines errors made by second-language learners in their language performance (Al-Tamari, 2019; Corder, 1981; Fauzan et al., 2020; McDowell, 2020). Error analysis was introduced in the 1960s and the 1970s to investigate second-language acquisition (McDowell & Liardét, 2020). Corder (1971) and Richards (1974) were credited with popularizing the term "error analysis" in language studies, which refers to the examination of linguistic errors made by second-language learners (Al-Sobhi, 2019; Atmowardoyo, 2018; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019; McDowell & Liardét, 2020).

Error analysis is a major theory in second language learning that focuses on identifying and addressing incorrect language structures produced by learners (Al-husban, 2018). Error analysis is a technique drawn from the contrastive analysis framework without arguing errors due to language interference (Mahmood & Murad, 2018). The validity of the error analysis theory has been demonstrated by early

researchers (Al-khresheh, 2010; Brown, 2000; Kellerman, 1986, 1995; Leki, 1991; Lennon, 1991; Selinker, 1992; Teh, 1993) in explaining various types of foreign learners' errors, such as syntactic, grammatical, and phonological errors (as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016). For example, al-Khresheh (2010) showed the importance of error analysis in investigating a particular type of word order error in basic sentence structures. Likewise, AbiSamra (2003) employed the error analysis approach to examine different grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and lexical errors.

Studies have shown that Arab EFL learners find it difficult to learn English as a foreign language due to the dominance of Arabic in the classroom, which limits their exposure to a natural and interactive English language learning environment (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Alhussain, 2018; Alrasheedi, 2020; Hafiz et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 1977; Khalil, 2020; Omer, 2018). Learners frequently make syntax, morphology, pronunciation, and spelling errors because of language barriers (Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018). According to Rahmatullah (2020), Arabic has a negative effect on learning English due to the linguistic distinctions between the two languages.

Naimi (1989) discovered that most errors made by Jordanian EFL learners resulted from negative transfer from the Arabic language. More recent research has confirmed these findings and suggested that a learner's first language patterns can become a part of their linguistic input (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021; Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019; Shousha et al., 2020). Numerous studies (Ababneh, 2017; AbiSamra, 2003; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Diab, 1997; Hackling, 1991; Kambal, 1980; Khuwaileh & Al Shoumali, 2000; Lin, 2002; Mungungu, 2010; Peter, 2016; Scott & Tucker, 1977; Smith,

2001) have investigated EFL learners' writing performance and improved our understanding of linguistic errors and language teaching-learning across learners from different linguistic backgrounds (as cited in Hamed, 2018).

These studies demonstrated that English language learners have difficulty using tenses, articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, capitalization, word order, and word choice. Fareh (2014) conducted a study on the writing of English by Japanese EFL students to identify the most common errors made at the sentence level. Fareh found intense errors were the least serious among the identified errors. Likewise, Hafiz et al. (2018) found Arab EFL learners struggle to master sentence structure and subject-verb agreement.

Abushihab (2014) conducted a study on the writing errors of Turkish adult EFL learners and identified the following errors: 27 tense errors, 50 prepositional errors, 52 article errors, 17 errors in using passive and active voice, and 33 morphological errors. Tati and Peter (2016) conducted a study on the writing of adult ESL learners from Malaysia, focusing on syntactic errors. They found that the most frequently made errors were related to verbs, followed by spelling, sentence fragments, and punctuation. These errors were attributed to various factors such as repetition, redundant lexical choice, mother tongue interference, poor grammar, and inadequate vocabulary.

Al-Khresheh (2010) utilized Corder's error analysis approach to investigate the impact of L1 (Arabic) syntactic structures on L2 (English) syntactic structures, specifically on word order in simple sentence structures, among young Jordanian EFL learners. As a result, al-Khresheh revealed 1,266 interlingual errors in word sequence and

simple sentence structure made by the participants due to transfer from Arabic. However, recent research indicates that not only young Arab EFL learners but also adult learners exhibit similar syntactic errors influenced by Arabic (Ababneh, 2017; AbiSamra, 2003; Alhussain, 2018; Al-Quran, 2020; Diab, 1997; Khatter, 2019; Ridha, 2102).

Similar findings were discovered for adult EFL learners by Tahaineh (2010), who also agreed that these students had challenges with sentence construction and made errors in English syntax and grammar. Prepositions, such as *by, in, on, to, with, of, from, for,* and *at*, challenged EFL students from Jordanian colleges. The majority of errors made by EFL students are due to Arabic. However, a domain factor is also the English transfer strategies.

In another study, the concept of tense and various syntactic structures challenges Arab EFL college students in Oman. Al-Quran (2010) found frequent syntactic errors, including uncertain phrases, verbless clauses, and sentence structure, were present in student writing. Some students had difficulty writing *First every child when was born he has innate ideas* instead of *When every child is born, he has innate ideas.* An example of a verbless sentence that needs to be corrected is *He drived slowly and yet he late*, instead of writing He *drove slowly and therefore he was late.* Arabic interference and linguistic distinctions between Arabic and English caused the most reported errors.

In 2012, Ridha carried out a research project that examined how the first language (L1) of Arab college students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) was linked to their writing skills. The study specifically aimed to analyze the types and frequency of writing errors made by 80 participants. Grammar, lexical/semantic, mechanical, and word

order errors were the four categories used to classify the errors. The L1 transfer caused student errors. Iraqi EFL students struggled to construct appropriate interrogative or negative sentences, especially in the simple present and past tenses, because the auxiliary verbs (*do, does, did*) have no equivalent in Arabic.

Al-Khresheh (2010) utilized Corder's error analysis approach to investigate the impact of L1 (Arabic) syntactic structures on L2 (English) syntactic structures, specifically on word order in simple sentence structures, among young Jordanian EFL learners. The study revealed 1,266 interlingual errors in word sequence and simple sentence structure made by the participants due to transfer from Arabic. However, recent research indicates that not only young Arab EFL learners but also adult learners exhibit similar syntactic errors influenced by Arabic (Abdul-Rahman & Embi, 2016; Al Qahtani, 2015).

In 2014, Al Murshidi analyzed the subject-verb agreement and punctuation errors of 15 male students from various colleges who participated in the study. I discovered that the most common writing errors made by the students were related to the misuse of articles, auxiliaries, punctuation, misspellings, grammar, and verb tenses and forms. In particular, the students demonstrated errors in subject-verb agreement, such as using the plural form of "*consist*" instead of the singular in the sentence "*My family consist,*" which indicates a grammatical mistake in subject-verb agreement. The study attributed these errors to the fact that Arabic verbs must agree with subjects in person, number, and gender.

Rass (2015) found that Palestinian adult EFL students were challenged in composing well-written English paragraphs by examining the transfer of Arabic stylistic features to English. The sample of 205 students from the data collected over the past 14 years demonstrated a pattern of repeated errors. FL students frequently struggle with paragraph form, sentence structure, topic, and organization in their writing. Some students found it challenging to compose strong themes and ending sentences, support information with arguments and examples, and utilize proper discourse markers. These errors resulted from EFL students transferring Arabic text into English.

Researchers found that EFL learners carry linguistic structure and stylistic features from their mother tongue to English (Brown, 2000; Corder, 1981; Selinker & Gass, 2008; Richards, 1971b; Selinker, 1972). Al-Khatib (2001) found that Arab EFL learners write long sentences with coordinating conjunctions. Alsamadani (2010) observed that Arab EFL learners tend to engage in extensive discussion and repetition of phrases before stating the main points when communicating in English. Arab EFL learners repeat themselves and argue through presentation and elaboration (Almehmadi, 2012).

According to Alqhtani's (2017) study, which utilized error analysis, the reasons behind the occurrence of syntactic errors by 15 Saudi female EFL secondary students were investigated. The study used a diagnostic writing test to collect data, and students had to write an essay on various topics. The findings indicated that most EFL secondary students made syntactic errors and struggled with punctuation, articles, adjectives, spelling, fragments, verbs, conjunctions, capitalization, vocabulary, subject omission,

pronouns, prepositions, and noun usage. The two primary reasons behind student errors were interlingual interference and a need for more English proficiency.

Al-Qadi (2017) investigated the use of English articles by Saudi adult EFL learners, examining whether errors in article usage were significantly influenced by the learners' L1 (Arabic) or L2 (English) language. In addition to conducting interviews with EFL instructors, Al-Qadi administered a multiple-choice test to examine writing convention errors. The study utilized the surface structure taxonomy to categorize errors as omissions, additions, or substitutions, with the most frequent errors being additions and the least frequent being omissions. Substitution errors were the second most frequent. In addition, al-Qadi found that interference from Arabic was the primary cause of errors in article usage, with the incomplete application of rules also contributing to some errors.

El Shaban (2017) investigated the syntactic errors of English adjectives among Libyan EFL undergraduate students using an error analysis approach. El Shaban found that Arabic-speaking EFL learners often need help selecting the proper adjectival order. The results also showed no significant difference in language interference and developmental errors across the four years of the study. Specifically, Arab EFL learners struggled to differentiate between *opinion* and *factual* adjectives, which is not distinguished in Arabic. They also had difficulty employing the subject-adjective agreement, especially when using the *-ing* or *-ed* endings. Overgeneralization is believed to cause these errors because Arab learners think any subject can be described by an adjective ending in *-ing* or *-ed.*

Tahseldar et al. (2018) examined how Arabic verb systems affected Lebanese university undergraduate EFL learners' ability to compose the present perfect. Tahseldar et al. used a sample of 100 paragraphs written by 50 participants as a primary data source. Interlanguage was the cause of the learners' incorrect production of the present perfect tense. Instead of using present perfect because it was complex, students frequently employed the simple past and present because learners generally understood them. EFL students developed a systematic linguistic framework that replaced the present perfect with a verb system that included their native Arabic language and English verb systems.

In an academic speaking situation, Yaseen et al. (2018) examined the syntactic errors and potential contributing factors among Arab EFL post-graduate students. Yaseen et al. recorded the data on audiotape and conducted a face-to-face interview with the individual before transcribing and coding it. In the first meeting, participants made errors in six categories: sentence structure, verbal errors, prepositions, relative clauses, articles, and adverbial clauses. During the second meeting, the participant made errors in five categories: verbal, sentence-level, prepositional, relative, and article use. These errors can be explained by interference from the L1. The interview results revealed that the participants knew about errors made but had no control over them because errors have been fossilized (Yaseen et al., 2018).

In those previous research studies, students needed to be more actively engaged in analyzing their own errors instead of researchers collecting samples of students' language and conducting error analysis themselves. While this approach could yield valuable insights into common errors and patterns, it had limitations, such as the potential for

students to lack a full understanding of their errors and the context in which they were made (Makino,1993). According to Bukit (2020), reflection and self-evaluation are essential for developing cognitive abilities and autonomy in the classroom. When students actively engage in these practices, it can enhance their learning outcomes' effectiveness and long-term impact.

Makino's (1993) study investigated the effectiveness of self-correction in enhancing the accuracy of EFL learners' writing and reducing the number of errors made. The study involved 45 Japanese university students who were asked to create compositions in English, followed by self-correction using my guidelines. The written works were assessed again to assess how self-correction impacted the accuracy of the writing. Makino revealed that self-correction effectively improved the accuracy of EFL learners' writing by enabling them to identify and correct a broad range of compositional errors. Additionally, self-correction decreased the number of errors made by learners in subsequent compositions. Makino concluded that using one's own corrections can help EFL writers write more accurately. Practicing self-correction makes learners more conscious of their errors and strengthens their ability to correct them.

In Feng's (2014) study, the significance of corpus analysis as a self-error correction tool for second language learners was examined with an emphasis on how well it might facilitate the detection and correction of writing errors. According to Feng, corpus analysis helped students recognize and fix grammatical, lexical, and collocational errors in their writing while also improving their language skills and grammatical awareness. The study emphasized the importance of learners receiving adequate direction

and support when utilizing corpus analysis as a self-error correction mechanism. Instructors should also integrate corpus analysis into their pedagogical practices to optimize language proficiency outcomes.

In 2018, Balderas and Cuamatzi conducted a study to evaluate the impact of peer and self-correction on college students' writing skills. Balderas and Cuamatzi examined the benefits and drawbacks of these correction methods to determine how well they enhance students' writing skills. I discovered that both self-correction and peer-correction procedures could improve the average quality of college students' writing by assisting students in identifying and correcting errors. In addition, students who participated in self and peer correction exhibited improved attention to detail and enhanced writing confidence. However, the study also emphasized the importance of instructor support and guidance to ensure students correctly employ these correction techniques.

In a 2019 study, Zeng investigated the efficacy of self-initiated self-repair as a concept in second-language learning among Chinese EFL learners. Zeng found that self-initiated self-repair was more effective for improving language proficiency than traditional error correction methods such as teacher or peer correction. Additionally, Zeng revealed that EFL learners strongly preferred self-initiated self-repair, indicating their tendency to correct errors without external assistance. My findings highlighted the significance of metalinguistic awareness in learning a second language; as a result, instructors of languages should concentrate on helping learners grasp language structure and motivate them to detect and correct errors actively. These results imply that encouraging metalinguistic awareness can be essential for learning a second language.

Error Analysis Theory

Error analysis is a methodology first introduced in the 1960s and 1970s to investigate second language acquisition (McDowell &Liardét, 2020). Corder (1971) and Richards (1974) were credited with popularizing the term "error analysis" to describe language studies that concentrate on the linguistic errors produced by individuals learning a second language. (Al-Sobhi, 2019; Atmowardoyo, 2018; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019; McDowell & Liardét, 2020). Error analysis is a technique developed from the contrastive analysis theoretical foundations to examine L2 learners' errors without claiming that all errors result from first language interference (Mahmood & Murad, 2018).

Mahmood and Murad (2018) argued that the contrastive analysis perspective predicts that learners will face challenges when learning a second language with a system different from their first language. The practical criticism of contrastive analysis asserts that interference, or the influence of the learner's first language, is the primary cause of errors when learning a second language. This criticism has led to the development of error analysis as a field of study (AlTameemy & Daradkeh, 2019).

However, error analysis claims that interference is not the only dominant error factor; it is also overgeneralized (Atmowardoyo, 2018). Errors are not only attributable to comparing the native and target languages. Learning strategies influence the learning of a second language (Corder, 1967).

Error analysis elaborated over decades and found broader practical applications within English language teaching (Atmowardoyo, 2018; McDowell, 2020; McDowell & Liardét, 2020; Xie, 2019). Error analysis has shifted the focus of researchers from

language comparison to studying the patterns and types of errors made by EFL learners (Al-Tamari, 2019; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019; McDowell & Liardét, 2020). Error analysis is a procedure researchers and educators use to collect samples to describe the errors found, classify the errors, and evaluate the seriousness of errors.

Errors can be a learning tool (Corder, 1967). Errors are warning signs showing how well the student understands the second language (Gass & Selinker, 1994). Both theoretical and practical uses are for error analysis. While the practical function aids the researcher in understanding how learning and instruction are related, the theoretical function describes the learner's knowledge of the target language (Fauzan et al., 2020).

Procedures of Error Analysis

Error analysis is a method for locating, categorizing, and methodically evaluating incorrect structures created by a foreign language learner (Crystal, 1980). Self-error analysis can help learners improve their learning process and problem-solving skills (Bukit, 2020). Engaging students in error analysis could help them develop metacognitive abilities like self-reflection, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Learners could increase their awareness of their learning and better grasp how to improve by critically analyzing their thinking and errors (Dyah Nirmala Sani & Rosnawati, 2022). Engaging students in error analysis could encourage students to work collectively to identify and correct errors, which can help to foster collaborative learning. This process could encourage community building, promote the exchange of information, and provide students a chance to teach one another (Bukit, 2020; Dyah Nirmala Sani & Rosnawati, 2022).

According to Khansir (2012), error analysis involves comparing errors made by learners of a target language to the target language's own rules and structures. Error analysis reveals the processes used by language learners of second languages (Hussain & Abdullah, 2019). According to several researchers (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Fauzan et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2018; McDowell & Liardét, 2020), syntactic errors can be investigated by observing, analyzing, classifying, and explaining the causes of these errors. This qualitative research study adopts Corder's (1974) error analysis approach. Corder (1974) outlined a four-stage process of the error analysis approach, mainly collecting the data, identifying the error, describing the error, and explaining the error. The following subsections provide a brief explanation of these processes.

Sample of the Learner's Language. Collecting enough data was essential for analyzing the learner's language and comprehending how language functions. Conversely, collecting insufficient data could significantly impact the study's findings (Al-Sobhi, 2019). The sample includes determining its size and homogeneity (background, age, and location; AL-Sobhi, 2019; Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020; Hafiz et al., 2018; Salmani Nodoushan, 2018; Xie, 2019). Hafiz et al. (2018) described three sample sizes used in error analysis: massive, specialized, and random. A massive sample involves collecting many words used by multiple students to create a comprehensive list of errors. However, most previous error analysis studies have shown that collecting data from a massive sample is time-consuming, and research findings cannot be generalized (Al-Sobhi, 2019).

Chaudhary and Al Zahrani (2020) distinguished between two categories of language samples used in error analysis: incidental samples, which are language use samples produced by a single learner, and specialized samples, which are collected from a small group of learners (Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020). Language researchers prefer a specific sample type as it is more manageable, practical, and less time-consuming (Al-Sobhi, 2019). Corder (1981) outlined the clinical and experimental approaches to extracting sample information. The clinical method is appropriate for learners' productive skills, such as interviewing, writing, and translating texts. The experimental method employs instruments primarily to collect the necessary participant data.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. This study adopted a clinical approach, requiring interviewing Arabic-speaking postsecondary EFL learners about how they perceived and experienced learning English sentence structure. The current study also leaned toward the error analysis technique, which examined students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents revealed about Arabic-to-English writing assignments.

Identification of Learners' Errors. Identifying errors should focus on detecting and distinguishing between the learners' errors and mistakes in the data. Errors result from complex interactions during language use; finding systematic errors assists in understanding the rules. However, mistakes are due to performance (Corder, 1971).

Therefore, researchers should check the consistency of the learner's performance to differentiate between errors and mistakes (Al-Sobhi, 2019).

There are three alternative interpretations of errors outlined by Corder (1981): normal, authoritative, and plausible. A normal interpretation is when an analyst understands the meaning of the sentence. Authoritative interpretation requires asking the student what the sentence means. Conversely, a plausible interpretation examines the sentence's context in the learner's first language.

Description of a Learner's Errors. Hafiz et al. (2018) recommended that errors be classified based on the type of error made by students, which would help improve language teaching and learning strategies. The error categories and observed error types are reported along with the study's findings in the descriptive classification of errors (Dulay et al., 1982). Both systematic and non-systematic errors are possible. Systematic errors show the student's proficiency level. Students can, however, correct non-systematic errors caused by carelessness or exhaustion (Abdel-Fattah et al., 2018; Qasem, 2020).

Corder (1981) divided errors into four categories: omissions, additions, selections, and misordering. Omission errors occur when a vital component is absent, and addition errors occur when an extraneous element is added. Misordering errors occur when elements are arranged incorrectly, and selection errors occur when the incorrect object is chosen.

Explanation of Learners' Errors. The explanation stage of learners' errors examines errors, percentages, and frequencies (Adila, 2019). Error analysis examines

interlingual and intralingual sources of errors (Şahin, 2020). Rule ignorance, incomplete

rule application, and overgeneralization are the causes of intralingual errors (Damaiyanti,

2021; Şahin, 2020). Richards (1971b) classified errors observed in samples of EFL

learners as the following:

- Overgeneralization occurs when learners use an incorrect structure based on their knowledge of the target language.

- Ignorance of rule restriction happens when learners fail to observe restrictions or existing structures.

- Incomplete application of rules occurs when learners fail to develop the required structure to produce acceptable sentences.

- The false hypothesis occurs when learners fail to recognize the variations in the target language.

Benefits of Error Analysis

Corder (1967) was the first linguist to acknowledge the importance of errors and

shift the focus from teaching to learning. Analyzing writing samples for errors benefits

teachers, learners, and researchers. Error analysis is a helpful approach for learners to

identify their writing mistakes, understand their limitations, and enhance their writing

abilities. Students can learn from their errors, comprehend how to use grammatical

structures properly, and take ownership of their learning by participating in the analysis

of their writing samples, which results in an improved understanding of languages (Adila,

2019; Corder, 1981; Fauzan et al., 2020; Kurniawan, 2018; Mahmood & Murad, 2018;

Şahin, 2020). Engaging learners in error analysis can be a powerful way to encourage

learner autonomy, metacognitive growth, and collaborative learning, enhancing learning

results (Nirmala Sani & Rosnawati, 2022).

Error analysis informs instructors about student progress and provides

researchers with language learning evidence (Corder, 1967). Error analysis helps

educators understand students' learning levels' hypotheses, understand strategies used by

second language learners, and monitor students' learning (Crystal, 1980). Error analysis

offers instructor-focused teaching to solve the linguistic problems L2 learners face (Al-

husban, 2018; Al-Sobhi, 2019; Alzahrani, 2020). Errors show learning strategies and

evidence of learning development (Corder, 1981). Error analysis has both practical and

theoretical implications. While the practical component assists in improving learning-

teaching for students or teachers, the theoretical function examines the language learning

process (Corder, 1981).

Engaging students in error analysis skills can help learners become more fluent in

their language learning (Dyah Nirmala Sani & Rosnawati, 2022). Errors made by

students help researchers understand the nature of the language acquisition process.

Errors offer insights into interference and aid instructors and curriculum designers in

understanding the errors that interfere with learning (Adila, 2019; Al-Sobhi, 2019).

Understanding the nature of errors helps instructors make students understand the origin

of learners' errors (Corder, 1981).

Causes and Sources of Linguistic Errors

Contrastive analysis suggested errors were caused by transfer from the learner's

native language, but error analysis demonstrated that first language interference was not

the sole source of errors (Shekhzadeh & Gheichi, 2011). Linguists have discovered errors

in error analysis sources beyond interlingual errors, primarily intralingual or

developmental factors (Brown, 2000; Corder, 1974; Gass, 1979; Richards, 1971b;

Selinker, 1972). Intralingual errors stem from challenges in learning the second language,

but interlingual errors are caused by the learner's first language interfering (Wajej &

Mujiyanto, 2017).

The following sections investigated several causes of syntactic error based on

linguists' works on applied linguistics (Brown, 1980; Corder, 1981; Khansir & Pakdel,

2019; Lamri & Cherifi, 2020; Richards, 1971b). The most interlingual and intralingual

errors fall into the following general categories.

Interlingual Transfer

Learners' native language causes interlingual errors due to L1 interference

(Brown, 1980; Corder, 1971; Gass, 1984; James, 2013; Richards, 1971b; Selinker, 1972).

Interlingual errors resulting from the learner's native language strongly influence

language proficiency (Corder, 1981). When a learner's L1 interferes, interference

obstructs learners from acquiring the L2 (Rana et al., 2019). Errors result from

transferring similar rules from the learner's native language to the foreign language

(Kampookaew, 2020).

Interference errors are when a learner transfers a rule from their native language

to the target language incorrectly. Comparing the learner's error system in L2 to L1 can

help identify interference errors. Both first-language learners and speakers of second

languages use errors as a method of language acquisition (Corder, 1981; Kampookaew, 2020; Kazazoglu, 2020; Sahin, 2020).

Multiple researchers divided transfer errors as negative and positive (Bai & Qin, 2018; Brown, 2000; Corder, 1974; James, 1998; Lado, 1957; Mahmood & Murad, 2018; Odlin, 1989; Richards, 1974). Language transfer describes how a learner's first language affects their ability to learn and use a second language (Ellis, 1997). The similarities and differences between the target language and any mother tongue influence language transfer (Odlin, 1989). Language learners depend on the structures of their first language (L1) (James, 1998).

Negative Transfer. Negative transfer (interference) occurs when transferred structures do not match second-language rules, which makes learning more difficult (Selinker, 1972). Interference is the error that foreign language learners make that can be linked to their native tongue (Dulay & Burt, 1977). Whether L1 and L2 rules overlap, the observed transfer has a negative or positive aspect (Wanderley et al., 2021). Because the L2 lacks metalinguistic understanding, learners must rely on their L1 (Wanderley et al., 2021).

Ellis (1997) argued that L2 errors increase as the structural gap between the two languages widens. Learners determine the use of L1 based on learner proficiency level (Woodall, 2002). When the less proficient EFL learner faces a challenging task, they frequently transfer to L1 (Wang, 2003). Safa (2018) confirmed the earlier findings and indicated that learners might rely more on prior linguistic knowledge if they are less familiar with L2.

Arab EFL learners are significantly affected by the Arabic language (Kupferberg & Olshtain, 1996). Arabic has a distinct grammatical structure from English. As a result, errors occur because students incorrectly transfer these Arabic-to-English features (Thyab, 2020). Arab students generally transfer concepts from Arabic into English, composing poorly written samples (Khuwaileh, 1995).

Positive Transfer. Researchers and linguists found that the degree and type of transfer (positive or negative) depend on the similarities and contrasts between the two languages (Dweik & Qawar, 2015; Ellis, 1997; Odlin, 1989). The positive transfer is less critical to applied linguists than the negative transfer since only negative transfer poses difficulties for teaching and learning (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2018). Positive transfer happens when the initial language and the target language are similar, aiding in learning the target language (Safa, 2018; Shousha et al.,2020).

According to Safa (2018), when the newly learned language is similar to the previously taught language and the performance is correct, it leads to positive transfer. This is generally not problematic. However, Liu (2001) suggested that negative transfer should be avoided as it results in incorrect learning. Selinker and Gass (2008) also acknowledged that errors resulting from positive transfer might occur due to a lack of proficiency with the target language.

Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007) noted the possibility of negative transfer despite shared grammatical elements between English and Arabic. For example, Arabic EFL students struggled to understand plurality cases, used the wrong word order and

subject-verb agreement, missed the verb to be, and misspelled words due to the linguistic differences between Arabic and English (Wajej & Mujiyanto, 2017).

Intralingual Transfer. Intralingual transfer is a technique employed by second language learners to use their mother tongue to communicate by overgeneralizing and paraphrasing when the second language falls short (Mahmoud, 2019). Error analysis theory claims errors are due to intralingual interference rather than interlingual transfer due to the interference structure of L2 itself (Adila, 2019). Corder (1967) was the first linguist to challenge the origins of errors resulting from contrasting first- and second-language structures. Corder underlined the significance of intralingual interference as the root of errors resulting from learners' inadequate proficiency in the target language.

Interference occurs within target language rules without a link to the first language because of inadequate target language learning (Corder, 1981; Gass, 1979; James, 2013; Richards, 1971b; Selinker & Gass, 2008). Intralingual errors occur in the target language due to overgeneralization, incorrect rule application, and ignorance of rule restrictions (Corder, 1971; Hussain & Abdullah, 2019; James, 2013; Merizawati, 2019; Richards, 1971b; Selinker, 1972; Shousha et al., 2020; Ussak & Zaretsky, 2021). Kurniawan (2018) argued that intralingual interference is also a mistake because second-language learners lack L2 competence. Intralingual errors reflect students' competence in acquiring language at a particular stage (Rana et al., 2019).

Richard's Perspective. Richards (1971b) examined learners' errors from different language backgrounds, showed various errors among EFL learners, and challenged the belief that learners' errors resulted from L1 transference. Instead, many

errors originate from learners' strategies in language learning and interference with the target language (Richards, 1974). Richards (1971b) classified intralingual errors into various categories to better understand errors:

- Interlanguage interference errors occur when the first language (L1) interferes with acquiring a second language.

- Intralingual errors are caused by the target language, not the first language.

- Developmental errors occur when learners hypothesize about the target language based on limited experiences. For instance, some students mistakenly believe it indicates the present tense marker. Thus, the student writes: *He is talk to the teacher* (Touchie, 1986).

- Overgeneralization occurs due to the influence of learning strategies on items within the target language. For example, overgeneralization occurs when language learners generalize a grammatical rule in cases that do not apply (Brown, 2000). Learners simplify and overgeneralize to reduce linguistic burden (Baihaqi, 2020).

- Ignorance of rule restriction occurs when learners fail to follow the rules of the existing language structure by adding additional rules to a sentence. For example, *Teachers can motivate the students to work hard by *encourage them* (Kampookaew, 2020).

- Incomplete application of rules occurs when students do not use a fully developed structure. Instead, students adopt simple rather than complex rules

to communicate effectively (Kampookaew, 2020). Example: Teacher: *Do you study much?* Student: *Yes, I study much.*

- False concepts may arise due to poor teaching methods and materials, but errors should not be considered problematic since they reveal learners' learning. An example sentence highlighting a potential false concept in the learner is "**It's always better to memorize things than to understand them.*" (Alwan, 2020)

Selinker's Perspective. Selinker (1972) introduced interlanguage theory and argued that interlanguage is a separate second language system. The student's language is a combination of the native and target languages because transfer errors are linked to sentences in the mother tongue (Selinker & Lamendella, 1981). The process of interlanguage involves the learner making temporary adjustments to their approach toward the target language's grammar.

The interlanguage theory is distinct from the contrastive and error analysis approaches. Unlike these approaches, interlanguage theory posits that the learner creates a third language that is separate from their native language (L1) and second language (L2) and, therefore, does not support the idea of direct comparison between the two languages (Al-Sobhi, 2019). Instead, interference can occur when learners become too dependent on a single language (Kurniawan, 2018). The transfer is the outcome of the influence the target language's similarities and differences from any earlier acquired languages may have on the learner's language development (Odlin, 1989).

Interlanguage theory can explain how children and adults acquire a second language (Ellis, 1997). However, Wang (2020) claimed that interlanguage theory differs from the speaker's native language. Since interlanguage theory can link the speaker's native language with the target language, it varies from the target language theory. Furthermore, because learners are still developing their grammatical systems, they do not have the same linguistic proficiency as native speakers (Fauzi, 2021). Therefore, interlanguage theory guides the learners' development of their linguistic system (Corder, 1981). Saville-Troike (2006) outlined distinctive characteristics of interlanguage theory:

- The learner's internal grammar governs interlanguage and can be analyzed based on correct spelling and grammar.
- Interlanguage is dynamic as the learner's system of rules changes frequently.
- Interlanguage has a reduced system because learners use less complex syntactic structures and communication needs than L2.

Selinker (1972) categorized the sources of errors into overgeneralization, second-language learning methods, transfer of training/context of learning, and second-language communication strategies.

Language Transfer. According to Selinker (1972), language transfer is the process through which second-language learners transmit the patterns from their native language (L1) to the target language (L2). Ellis (1997) defined language transfer as the influence of the learner's L1 on acquiring and using an L2. Selinker also proposed the principles of positive and negative transfer in language learning. When native and foreign

languages are similar, the positive transfer occurs; when they are different, the negative transfer occurs (Odlin, 1989).

Transfer of Training/Context of Learning. Transfer of training occurs when the learner's performance in the present setting is impacted by the previous teaching strategy, such as by a classroom activity or teacher (Suteerapongsit, 2020). Transfer of training is the effect of instruction on bilinguals' L2 linguistic systems (Richards, 1971b; Selinker, 1972). If training is provided in poorly formed structures, it will result in fossilization and training transfer (Selinker, 1972). Fossilization is the tendency for learners to stop constructing their interlanguage grammar in the second language (Selinker, 1972).

Approaches for learning a second language. Language learning strategies occur when learners attempt to employ a particular strategy to develop their linguistic competence in L2 (Corder, 1974; Tarone, 2006). Some learning strategies include using mnemonics to remember target vocabulary, memorizing textbook dialogues, and using flashcards (Tarone, 2006). Language learning strategies also involve how learners communicate with others, including native speakers (Al-Sobhi, 2019). Second language learning is the intentional attempt made by students to learn the target language through various strategies (Odlin, 1989).

Overgeneralization. Overgeneralization of L2 rules refers to applying rules in inappropriate contexts due to a lack of knowledge about exceptions to rules (Harahap, 2021; Selinker, 1972). Second language learners formulate linguistic rules using information, including their native language, second language, teachers, classmates, and peers (Brown, 2000). Overgeneralization is attributed to learners' simplification strategy

to reduce linguistic elements to make communication easier (Abbas et al., 2019; Ellis, 1989; Selinker, 1972).

Strategies of Second Language Communication. Selinker (1972) identified communication strategy as a process that affects learning a second language. Second language learners use communication strategies to resolve problems when the interlanguage systems seem unequal to the task (Kárpáti, 2017). Second language learners use communication strategies for second language communication by switching to their mother tongue, asking for help from teachers and peers, using gestures, coining words, and paraphrasing words (Rukmini & Fitriati, 2018).

Errors Versus Mistakes

Several researchers found that EFL learners repeatedly commit errors and mistakes (Adila, 2019; Al-Sobhi, 2019; Amini & Bayesteh, 2020; Amnuai, 2020; Moiden & Liaw, 2021; Rana et al., 2019). Multiple researchers have categorized errors as performance and competence in language learning (Al-Sobhi, 2019; Alwan, 2020; Amnuai, 2020; Bongaerts, 1983; Brown, 2000; Corder, 1974; Merizawati, 2019; Moiden & Liaw, 2021; Selinker, 1972). Errors are structurally organized, challenging to repair, and associated with mother tongue interference and lack of linguistic competence; however, mistakes are self-corrected and related to the learner's performance, including memory limitation, emotional strain, lack of attention, fatigue, and carelessness (Brown, 2000; Corder, 1981; Ellis, 1997; Richards, 2002; Riddell, 1990).

Examining the learner's deviation consistency and ability to correct errors can help distinguish between errors (competence) and mistakes (performance) so that

consistent and uncorrected ones are errors and corrected ones are mistakes (Amnuai, 2020; Ellis, 1997; Nuruzzaman et al., 2018). According to Merizawati (2019), learners make errors in the target language because they might not fully comprehend it. Norrish (as cited in Bongaerts, 1983) suggested that errors can be repetitive when a student has not fully acquired a specific language component. Competence errors originate from the learners' systematic foreign language competence (Brown, 2000).

Competence errors are systemic defects caused by a lack of linguistic knowledge and awareness rather than performance (Corder, 1981; Selinker & Gass, 2008). Ellis (1989) confirmed that performance errors are not due to a lack of language knowledge but student negligence. Nevertheless, we should not ignore competence or performance errors because errors show how second-language learners discover a new language and their learning strategies (Brown, 2000).

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the research literature that examined common syntactic errors using error analysis. The literature review showed that mastering English language sentence structure was challenging for Arabic-speaking adult EFL learners because Arabic has different sentence structures (Hamed, 2018; Nasser, 2020; Shaalan et al., 2019; Thyab, 2019).

Numerous researchers have examined how Arab EFL students learn Arabic to English using error analysis (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Al-Sobhi et al., 2018). However, students were often passive participants in these studies, defined by categories and numbers. In my study, students actively participated in improving their sentence

structure skills by identifying and recording their errors along with the corresponding corrections, using the traditional Corder's error analysis model. The results of this study could benefit Arab EFL learners by providing students with a more profound comprehension of English sentence errors, which aided them in improving their mastery of English sentence structure and increased their preparedness for future academic and professional pursuits.

For this research, I used a basic qualitative methodology. The foundation of qualitative research was the methodological pursuit of understanding how people see, approach, experience, and interpret the world and particular phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). By understanding Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their writing, I contributed to understanding the literature gaps related to Arab adult EFL learners' language learning research through this basic qualitative study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this basic qualitative study, I investigated Arabic-speaking EFL learners'

perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students

complete their error analyses of their own writing. In this chapter, I provided information

regarding the methodological strategies for this study. The first segment of this chapter

offered information regarding the research design and subsequent appropriate

justification. In the second portion of this chapter, I provided the methodology for the

research study (Stewart, 2020). In the third segment of this chapter, I recognized and

illuminated ethical considerations within the research study and discussed issues

regarding trustworthiness within the research study. Finally, I ended the last section by

providing a brief overview of the significant aspects of the present study (Stewart, 2020).

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I selected 10 postsecondary Arabic-speaking EFL students majoring

in English at Hebron University to understand their perceptions of the challenges in

learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their

own writing. The study was based on two research questions:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of learning English sentence structure?

RQ2: What are students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error

analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments?

I used a basic qualitative research method and design for this study because

multiple perspectives are included in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The research

setting and the research participants were selected with the purpose and intent of a

qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). The rationale for choosing a qualitative study was to gather more comprehensive data on the experiences and perspectives of Arabic-speaking EFL learners as they learn English sentence structure to gain deeper insights (Britten,1995). Quantitative methods are too shallow when exploring phenomena in depth. Instead, in-depth interviews are used to better understand the phenomenon (Sukamolson, 2007).

I chose qualitative research because my problem was too complex for quantitative measures or statistical analyses. Quantitative methods focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, while my research involves complex human interactions and experiences that require a more nuanced approach. Creswell and Poth (2016) also acknowledged the limitations of quantitative methods in capturing lived experiences, whereas Ravitch and Carl (2016) described how quantitative research relies on numerical data and statistical analysis. Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data are not numerical and cannot be analyzed using statistical methods (Sukamolson,2007). While quantitative methods are suitable for examining cause-and-effect relationships, qualitative methods are more appropriate for exploring the meaning of specific events or situations (Sukamolson, 2007).

Aspers and Corte (2019) claimed that qualitative research uses a targeted multi-method approach and naturalistic and interpretive methodologies to investigate the subject matter. It aims to gain insight into how individuals perceive, approach, and derive meaning from their experiences and various environmental phenomena (Ravitch &

Carl,2016). However, quantitative research best addresses the problem by understanding

what factors or variables influence an outcome (Creswell, 2009).

Qualitative approaches attempt to describe experiences from the experiencer's

point of view by connecting the researcher's interpretations to the participants'

experiences (Gill, 2020). According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative technique

captures the participants' voices and experiences rather than the researcher's. Researchers

gather information in fundamental qualitative research to understand what the study's

participants have to say (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative researchers collect and

analyze data using interpretative methods to gain insight into the research topic. In

contrast, quantitative researchers use mathematically based approaches to collect and

analyze numerical data to test hypotheses and establish patterns or relationships

(Creswell, 2009).

Goertzen (2017), in contrast, described quantitative research methods as the

gathering and examining of structured data that may be represented numerically.

Quantitative studies, however, cannot fully explain why people act, feel, or think as they

do (Goertzen, 2017). Instead, quantitative research gathers data in numbers to understand

a specific event (Sukamolson, 2007). In addition, quantitative researchers employ random

probability sampling to generalize their findings.

However, qualitative researchers select individuals because of their unique ability

to answer the study's research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Goertzen (2017)

suggested that quantitative research involves using numerical data to analyze information

and that the resulting findings can be assessed through statistical analysis. As a result,

quantitative research aims to develop precise and dependable measures for statistical evaluation.

Although there are many other qualitative research methods, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) concentrated on six typical qualitative designs: basic qualitative research, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative analysis, ethnography, and qualitative case studies. The most common type of qualitative education research is a basic qualitative study, which seeks to comprehend how people interpret their experiences and lives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research in phenomenology aims to comprehend the core of the human experience (Lodico et al.,2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study did not use phenomenology because its focus was on the experiences of Arab EFL students learning English as a second language, not necessarily on their personal lives. Ethnography focuses on culture and human civilization (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ethnography designs strive to understand the interaction of individuals with others within the culture or society in which they live (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

 Despite including some cultural components, this design did not fit the research problem because the study focused on understanding participant perceptions, and the phenomenon was not seen through the eyes of the culture. Instead, ethnographic researchers tend to investigate how the larger society influences interactions in a cultural group (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The goal of grounded theory research is to comprehend a process, collect qualitative data, and then create a theory based on the findings (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The reason for not

choosing a grounded theory design was that the goal was not to construct a theory based on the narrative data generated in the research but to comprehend the perspectives and real-life encounters of Arab students learning English as a foreign language (Lodico et al.,2010).

Narrative analysis is a method that involves using the stories that individuals share to gain an understanding of the meaning of the experiences conveyed in those stories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The narrative research design was not selected for the study because it was less about writing a narrative or a story (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Instead, the study focused on the experiences of Arab EFL students studying English sentence structure and the resources required to finish an English degree at an Arabian university.

Case studies are in-depth descriptions and analyses of a case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). They focus on documenting a group's or individual's experience in a specific setting by collecting data from multiple sources and perspectives (Lodico et al., 2010). Case studies were excluded as the research focuses on comprehending the experiences and perceptions of Arab EFL learners in mastering English sentence structure. In addition, researchers' subjective feelings may influence the case study and time-consuming process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Basic qualitative research was the most prevalent type, particularly in applied fields such as education, business, administration, social work, counseling, and health (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A basic qualitative research design was appropriate for this study, as it sought to understand individuals' experiences and perceptions through

interviews. This design was commonly used to comprehend the meaning individuals assign to social issues (Creswell, 2009). Basic qualitative research aims to understand how people perceive, approach, experience, and interpret the world and a specific phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

This basic qualitative research study could contribute to the identified research on existing social challenges for students trying to achieve proficiency in English. The study intended to contribute a deeper understanding of Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their writing. It was also intended to enhance students' career readiness and help them master syntactic structure in English sentences.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher influences all aspects of a study. Another essential consideration includes how researchers view and make sense of the world (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative research involves observing and analyzing phenomena within a specific context, often applying a carefully selected group of individuals rather than generalizing about a population based on a sample (Johnson et al., 2020). Qualitative research focuses on examining the meaning of people's lives. The researcher's role is to provide insights into concepts that may aid in understanding human social behavior, utilizing a distinct source of evidence (Yin, 2015).

As a researcher, I was responsible for recruiting participants, determining appropriate instruments, recording participant interviews, collecting all applicable data, coding and analyzing all applicable data, and interpreting all findings within the data

(Stewart, 2020). In qualitative research, the researcher's responsibility is to try to understand the ideas and feelings of study participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). My responsibility was to uphold and maintain all ethical standards, as the Walden University Institutional Review Board requires (Stewart, 2020). Qualitative researchers focus on exploring, examining, and describing people in natural environments (Orb et al., 2001). In this study, I aimed to ask questions that facilitate and further understand the lived experiences of postsecondary Arab EFL learners regarding learning English sentence structure. Therefore, precautions were taken to ensure that there were no personal or professional connections between me and the participants in this study.

Any unforeseen relationship that was considered biased between a potential participant and me was strictly observed and avoided (Stewart, 2020). Any research involving human participants necessitates an awareness of the ethical issues arising from such interactions (Orb et al., 2001). As an educator, I was aware of any biases that might stem from my experience within the field. My experiences at the forefront of my research and interviews made me aware of my biases. I did not use my workplace to conduct this research.

According to Walden University (2018), collecting data from colleagues and students with whom we interact regularly is likely fraught with methodological and ethical challenges. Individuals in the workplace are more likely to have heard about the study's hypotheses in advance, which can bias their responses and threaten the study's internal validity. Klamer et al. (2017) found that performing a research study within our work environment is a potential ethical issue during the data collection. Studying one's

workplace through research may pose power-related and risk-related issues to the researcher, participants, and the site being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Methodology

This basic qualitative study aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with 10 adult Arabic-speaking EFL learners because qualitative research typically used this approach (Lodico et al.,2010). Qualitative interviews were conducted using Zoom, a cloud-based videoconferencing service that enables secure online meetings and recording of sessions without the need for third-party software to ensure data protection (Zoom Video Communications Inc., 2021).

Semistructured interviews involve discussions between interviewees and researchers that are generally motivated by the purpose of the study but are strongly guided by the respondents' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences (Cridland et al., 2015). In addition, semistructured interviews have flexible questioning, flexible interview question format, and flexible question wording (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling for this study. Purposeful sampling is a procedure used in qualitative research where a researcher intentionally chooses participants to gather information about a phenomenon to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2002). However, purposeful sampling is not used to obtain large data to generalize the study (Creswell,

2009; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Instead, researchers should select participants who are experienced in the topic to build credibility for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The study's participants were selected based on the following criteria: second-year English major students at Hebron University, Arabic native speakers, and those studying English as a foreign language. In addition, the study included a mixed-gender sample of 10 adult Palestinian EFL students majoring in English at Hebron University who shared relatively homogenous cultural backgrounds and academic/linguistic experiences. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 22 years and received 11 years of English education in public schools.

The research objective informed the questions about the sampling size and the research design (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The selection of participants for this study was based on the criteria outlined above to gather the information necessary to address the research questions. The appropriate number of participants for a qualitative research sample can differ, and there are no fixed guidelines for the number of participants required (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Patton (2002) suggested that the research question and the purpose of the inquiry should determine the sample size in a research study.

Instrumentation

The primary data collection method for this qualitative research study was semistructured interviews. Using qualitative interviews enables researchers to gain insight into the individuals' experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). A semistructured interview best accomplishes understanding respondents' thoughts and perceptions

regarding learning English sentence structure challenges. A self-developed, semi-structured interview protocol (refer to Appendix C) was employed for this study. The protocol included an introduction and explanation of the study's purpose and interview procedures and a list of questions to guide the interview process (Jones, 2021; Lodico et al., 2010).

I created interview protocols to tackle the research problem and the study's purpose. These protocols comprised open-ended questions that provided a structure for conducting the interviews (Lodico et al., 2010). In addition, I developed a series of questions in alignment with the research questions (Jones, 2021). Creating the semistructured interview guide involves the input of education experts to ensure that interview questions are phrased to enable participants to answer the research questions. These experts can also help assess the validity of the questions (Creswell, 2009).

Through the ability to ask in-depth interview questions, the conversation clarifies and addresses the research problem, and the researcher can learn more about the factors contributing to syntactic errors (Belotto, 2018; Nyumba et al., 2018). The interview aimed to gather data to help understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure and to understand students' error analyses of their writing. The interview's guideline questions focused on understanding Arabic-speaking EFLs' perceptions of the successes, challenges, and resources needed to learn the English sentence structure necessary to complete their English degree at an Arabian university.

The probe questions also focused on understanding students' perceptions of the common errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments and the significance of mastering sentence construction to validate the collected data. The research questions drove my decision to utilize the syntactic errors students receive from their instructors in their written documents (Lodico et al., 2010).

The rationale for students' review of their documents and the analysis allowed them to understand further the research questions and their perceptions of their successes and challenges with sentence structure (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Morgan, 2022).

By involving learners in error analysis tasks, learners could better understand the structure and rules of the language they are learning. This increased knowledge could lead to more accurate and effective communications (Bukit, 2020). Students reviewing their documents could offer insights into how they apply syntax rules in various language contexts and complement data gathered from interviews (Bowen, 2009).

Incorporating students' sharing of information about errors in their documents provides diverse situations that can be observed as part of the research (Bowen, 2009). By comparing multiple drafts of written documents and analyzing the syntactic errors highlighted by the students during the semistructured interviews, I traced changes and developments in writing abilities over time (Yin, 1994). Artifacts are products of learning. Artifacts are often examined and described in writing as part of one's observations (Lodico et al., 2010).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruitment procedures began once Walden University approved IRB (Jones, 2021). Once my proposal was approved, I contacted the English Department at Hebron University to recruit a mixed-gender sample of 12 second-year undergraduate students majoring in the English language. I chose Hebron University because it attracted many Arab adult EFL learners. All the participants were Palestinian native Arabic speakers with relatively homogeneous linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The participants learned English as a foreign language in Arabic-speaking communities through formal college education. They attended public schools in the second year of a 4-year English language program in Palestine.

I emailed the participants the informed consent form when they expressed interest in volunteering. The form included a study description and the participation requirements (Jones, 2021). The selection criteria for potential participants were as follows: they must be Hebron University second-year English major students studying English as a foreign language and have Arabic as their first language. To meet these criteria, students must voluntarily participate in the study and confirm their consent by replying with the "I consent" statement from their email (Jones, 2021).

Semistructured interviews were used to collect the data. As part of the first data collection, students were active in learning correct sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis (Oladejo, 1993). Those participants took the Writing 1 and Research Methodology courses at Hebron University. In collecting the data, I used the students'

error analysis as described by the students in the semistructured interviews. This approach fits the nature of qualitative research and collected data that describes the syntactic errors in student analysis.

The semistructured interview was conducted with a minimum of five students enrolled in the Writing and Research courses. After receiving each eligible participant's informed consent, I emailed them to arrange a mutually agreeable time and date for a Zoom interview. (Jones, 2021). All interviews took place through Zoom and were recorded for transcription afterward (Jones, 2021). Zoom is a private online meeting and videoconferencing solution that supports group collaboration and session recording (Archibald et al., 2019).

I conveniently scheduled interviews for each participant, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. I also offered the participants a 15- to 20-minute follow-up meeting to discuss concerns, post-interview questions, and clarifications. I identified each interview participant with a numeric pseudonym (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3) to protect participants' identities and facilitate data coding (Jones, 2021). Finally, I explained the debriefing procedures that cover the participants' rights to withdraw their study-related data or end their participation in the study at any time. This review occurs before and after each participant's interview session (Jones, 2021).

Data Analysis Plan

I used interviews as the primary sources of data collection in this qualitative study. Data analysis is a process of interpreting the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009). The process is essential to establishing a comprehensive set of themes (Creswell & Poth,

2016). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. This qualitative study employed second-year EFL students as its informants and data sources by allowing students to identify their most frequent sentence-structure errors. The qualitative research method employed to gain a better understanding of their sentence construction perspectives was semistructured interviews. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of learning English sentence structure?

RQ2: What are students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments?

I collected data from individual semistructured interviews to address the first research question (see Appendix G for the data collection timeline). I recorded, transcribed, and saved all interviews in an electronic file. I used a log with a timeline of dates and times to organize the recordings and transcripts. I listened to each recording and transcribed the contents verbatim (Jones, 2021). I assessed the data quality, whether responses were ambiguous or contradictory, and whether I was getting the information I needed to answer my research question (Belotto, 2018).

The data was coded using thematic analysis as part of the qualitative research process. The analysis focused on the students' error analysis, as reported in the semistructured interviews. This approach was well-suited for qualitative research and allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the English sentence structure errors made

by the students. Thematic analysis identified patterns and themes across the coded data, providing insight into the phenomenon being investigated and answering the research questions. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) described thematic analysis as a method of a detailed description of themes and patterns identified in coded data.

I reviewed and printed each participant's transcript to create a thematic map of codes and relationships based on similar words and sentences. I initially used In Vivo coding as a qualitative data analysis emphasizing the participants' spoken words (Manning, 2017). I also employed the constant comparative method as a continuous approach to sorting and organizing raw data into groups and codes (Glaser, 1965). As a second round, I employed axial coding to identify relationships among the open codes and construct linkages between data (Allen, 2017). The constant comparison and coding of raw data to form codes and develop themes and thematic maps could lead to interpretation and conclusions. In thematic analysis, patterns or themes found in the data are identified, examined, and reported (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The study employed Corder's (1981) elicitation method to allow students to examine document errors, supported by semistructured interviews. Corder's error analysis model has been widely applied to second language learning and higher education to understand language carryover from the first to the target language (Mahmood & Murad, 2018; Shousha et al., 2020). This study allowed students to actively learn correct sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis guide (Oladejo, 1993).

The students used an error analysis guide to analyze the errors in their papers. The conceptual framework supporting my study employs Corder's error analysis model for students to use when revising their errors. Students employed Corder's procedures of error analysis as follows:

1. Selected a corpus of learners' language

2. Identified errors in the corpus

3. Classified and describes the errors

4. Clarified the psycholinguistic root causes of the errors

5. Ranked the errors to determine error gravity.

The first step was for learners to select a sample from written documents.

 Researchers suggested three types of error analysis based on the size of the sample when selecting a corpus of learner language: (a) large-scale samples, (b) focused samples, and (c) random samples (Al-Sobhi, 2019; Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020; Ellis, 1997). I selected a sample of 10 adult Arabic-speaking students majoring in English at Hebron University in their second year. Purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting participants experienced with a phenomenon to answer the study's research questions (Creswell, 2009; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Second, learners identified errors they commonly make using Corder's error analysis model for students in their writing papers. Third, I conducted a semistructured interview with participants to understand their perceptions of learning English sentence structure and their perceptions of their errors in written documents. Fourth, I carefully

analyzed the interview data by examining each word and sentence to identify patterns and themes.

This process provided me with insights into the participants' perspectives on language learning and their errors. Fifth, I coded and categorized errors into several categories to demonstrate how the students' patterns differ from the target form in sentence structure. I pointed out the similarities, differences, and connections. My next step was to categorize sentence structure errors and characterize them by utilizing the error analysis performed by the students during the semistructured interviews. My proposed set of sentence structure error categories was based on Ngangbam's (2016) classification and included the following:

- errors in adjectives and adjective phrases

- errors in adverbs and adverb phrases

- errors in noun phrases

- errors in sentence structure

- errors in word order

I examined the errors reported by the participants in their papers. I tried to identify any noticeable patterns, systems, or rules that may hinder learners from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language. This stage also aimed to identify the sources of errors made by students and to categorize errors as interlingual (resulting from interference from the learner's first language) or intralingual (arising from a lack of understanding of the second language's rules or patterns). Finally, the step was an evaluation of errors. It aimed to identify error gravity so language instructors and learners

could be more aware of these errors. This improved language pedagogy and helped

learners acquire the second language more effectively.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research seeks to comprehend the phenomenon by exploring how

participants encounter, perceive, and interpret their lives (Kornbluh, 2015). Validity in

research refers to the ability of researchers to confirm that their conclusions are accurate

and true to the participants' experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, developing

valid and trustworthy studies is paramount in qualitative research for the quality and rigor

of a study (Belotto, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2015).

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that trustworthiness is essential for establishing

credibility and rigor in qualitative research. Trustworthiness refers to the methods and

strategies qualitative researchers use to evaluate the thoroughness of qualitative studies

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Stahl & King, 2020). Researchers should report research

procedures and data transparently to build trustworthiness and credibility (Yin, 2015).

Qualitative research has been widely used in different fields; however, there is a

concern in assessing the quality of qualitative findings (Kornbluh, 2015). Validity is a

systematic approach to assessing a qualitative study's rigor (Ravitch & Carl, 2019; Yin,

2015). To determine whether a study is reliable, qualitative researchers also consider its

dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research means acknowledging and dealing with

complex patterns and potential biases in the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Internal

validity requires the researcher's ability to make meaningful interference from instruments (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative researchers promote credibility through triangulation, member checking, discussing negative cases, and peer debriefing (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Stahl & King, 2020).

I pursued credibility in this qualitative study by involving member checking or participant validation. Member checks are a person-centered approach to challenging interpretations, allowing participants to improve the study's accuracy and reinforcing ethical relationships (Creswell, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2015). Thus, soliciting participant perspectives challenges the researcher's biases by exploring alternative explanations and understanding the phenomenon better (Stahl & King, 2020).

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to how well study results can be transferred to different contexts or settings while retaining their contextual richness and significance (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Transferability is evaluated using specifics about the study's setting and the research's full explanation (Guba, 1981; Lodico et al., 2010). A thick description allows readers to determine whether to transfer information and findings to other settings because of shared characteristics (Creswell, 2016). Through thick descriptions, I pursued transferability in my research study by providing detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, interactions, culture, and detailed information on context and background.

Dependability

Lodico et al. (2010) suggested that dependability is a qualitative research criterion like reliability. Dependability involves ensuring the stability of the data and the ability to track the procedures used to collect and interpret it (Creswell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability is established through auditing the research process (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative studies depend on consistency and stability over time to be dependable (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability entails having a reasoned argument for how the researcher collects the data consistent with the researcher's argument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To achieve dependability in my qualitative study, I ensured a constant auditing research process by using multiple data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. I also created a reasonable rationale for choosing and creating a data collection plan that answers the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Most importantly, I ensured a consistent data analysis process in analyzing interviews and student documents. I also checked for discrepancies to identify any inconsistencies within the study (Jones, 2021).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how other researchers can verify the study's findings (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Confirmability is established through auditing the research process (Creswell, 2016). Qualitative researchers should be subjective and be able to explore biases and prejudices in interpretations of data through the reflexivity process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers should include the respondents' voices in analyzing

and interpreting the data to control biases (Anney, 2014). Guba (1981) pointed out that ensuring confirmability requires triangulation strategies, researcher reflexivity processes, and external audits. I used member checks for my qualitative research study to ensure confirmability. Member checks mean the data and interpretations are constantly tested (Guba, 1981).

Ethical Procedures

Ethical issues were present in any research. The research process creates tension between generalization and participant privacy; ethics in research include the appropriateness of the research and method design and reporting data (Orb et al., 2010). Qualitative researchers should clearly define their role in the research process since they are essential (Sanjari et al., 2014). The first step to prevent ethical issues was to gain approval from Walden University's IRB before conducting the study. After approval, the next step was to obtain informed consent from all participants (Jones, 2021). Informed consent involves participants understanding the study's purpose, their rights, procedures, risks, and withdrawal options (Creswell, 2016). Participation was voluntary; no one was coerced to join the study.

I did not compromise respondents' identities during data collection, analysis, and reporting to safeguard study subjects from harm (Kaiser, 2009). Therefore, I assigned pseudonyms to all participants in the study. Using pseudonyms throughout the research protects participants' identities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). All data were only accessible to me. I ensured hard copies of study data were maintained and secured in a filing cabinet at my house.

I saved all electronic files on my laptop with a secure password. All data gathered will be kept secret and safe for at least 5 years before being destroyed. After 5 years, I will destroy all physical copies of interview transcripts, audio recordings, video recordings, flash drives, and other storage media used in the research (Jones, 2021).

Summary

In this chapter, I justify and rationalize the research methods used to conduct this qualitative study. I also presented procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I addressed trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability issues. I used interviews as the primary sources of data collection in this qualitative study. A semistructured interview was well suited for understanding Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students completed their error analyses of their own writing. The rationale for students' review of their documents and the analysis allowed them to understand further the research questions and their perceptions of their successes and challenges with sentence structure (Bowen, 2009). I used purposeful sampling to categorize Arab EFL learner participants who were second-year undergraduate English majors at Hebron University. I also addressed my role to avoid ethical challenges in collecting and analyzing data. Finally, in Chapter 4, I addressed the findings of the study. First, I described the study's settings, demographic information, and data collection and analysis. I also provided evidence of trustworthiness and a chapter summary.

Chapter 4: Results

This basic qualitative study aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after the students completed error analyses of their own writing. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of learning English sentence structure?

RQ2: What are students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments?

Chapter 4 thoroughly overviewed how I collected and analyzed the data. I outlined the steps I took to ensure the credibility of the research. The chapter closed with the findings, supporting data, and a summary.

Setting

I used purposeful sampling for this study, which was a procedure used in qualitative research where a researcher intentionally chose participants to gather information about a phenomenon to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2002). However, purposeful sampling is not used to obtain large data to generalize the study (Creswell, 2009; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Instead, researchers should select participants who are experienced in the topic to build credibility for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

I selected the study's participants based on specific criteria: they were second-year English major students at Hebron University, native Arabic speakers, and studying English as a foreign language. The sample consisted of 10 participants, initially targeted

at 12 volunteers, forming a mixed-gender group. Due to a shortage, the criteria were

expanded to include third- and fourth-year English major students, thus enriching the

study's scope. The participants, aged 19 to 22, had received at least 7 years of English

education in public schools. Among the participants, three were in their third year, two in

their second, and one in their fourth year, reflecting varying levels of commitment and

proficiency. Additionally, four students had completed 3 years of study. Seven out of 10

students had dedicated 3 or more years to their English studies, displaying diverse yet

focused dedication (See Table 2).

Table 2

Participants' Years of Learning English Language at University

Participants	Years of Studying English at University
P1	3
P2	3
P3	2
P4	3
P5	2
P6	3
P7	2
P8	4
P9	3
P10	3

Demographics

The study comprised a mixed-gender group of 10 participants between 19 and 22

years old who were undergraduate students majoring in English at Hebron University. All

participants were native Arabic speakers with at least 7 years of English education in

public schools before university. The academic breakdown included three third-year

students, two second-year students, one fourth-year student, and four students who had

completed 3 years of study. This demographic composition highlighted the participants'

diverse yet focused dedication, making them suitable for investigating the challenges of learning English sentence structure in a non-native context.

Data Collection

This study's data collection began after IRB approval on February 29, 2024; the IRB will expire in October 2024. I collected data by interviewing 10 participants in a basic qualitative design to address the research questions. The invitation flyer was strategically circulated on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, specifically targeting potential participants within the Hebron University community who met the criteria. Participants were encouraged to share the invitation within their personal and professional networks, amplifying the outreach efforts and facilitating the engagement of more potential participants from within the university community.

Using purposeful sampling, a method in qualitative research where participants are deliberately selected based on specific criteria, I chose individuals who could provide valuable insights relevant to the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Through this approach, I aimed to gather focused and intentional information from individuals experienced in the topic, enhancing the study's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Potential participants initially responded to invitation flyers by emailing me their interest. Following this, I sent out informed consent forms that detailed the study's background, confirmed eligibility based on the selection criteria, and clarified their voluntary and confidential participation. Upon receiving their consent, I explained the

interview process. Each participant agreed to engage in a one-on-one semistructured interview via Zoom, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. They also consented to a follow-up call to review, confirm, and potentially edit their responses. Finally, participants confirmed their consent and scheduled their interviews via email.

Interviews primarily occurred on weekends to accommodate participants' schedules, with three opting for weekday sessions, typically after college hours. I audio-recorded each interview via Zoom, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Before commencing, participants were briefed on the recording process and allowed to proceed. Following the interviews, I uploaded the recordings to Cockatoo, a transcription tool. I then reviewed each transcription for accuracy.

To ensure anonymity, I assigned a distinct identifier, such as P1, P2, and P3, to each participant. To maintain confidentiality, I redacted any identifying details from the transcripts. Subsequently, I compiled participants' responses into a Microsoft Word document, where I individually reviewed them for accuracy and completeness. Each participant received a copy of their transcript for verification purposes and an invitation to provide any necessary clarifications or comments. Following this member-checking process, all participants confirmed the accuracy of their transcripts.

Once I finalized and validated the transcripts, I constructed a matrix to categorize the interview responses according to each research question. For example, I created a separate row for each participant's responses to every research question and interview question. This structured approach facilitated the analysis of data and interpretation of findings. Table 3 displays a sample of the matrix.

Table 3

Sample Matrix of Interview Data Organization: RQ1/Interview Question 1

Participant	Sample Responses
P1	I struggle with fear of making speaking mistakes and worry about grammar rules, which makes me hesitant to speak in front of others or even by myself.
P2	Distinguish whether the sentence is simple, compound, or complex, and challenge in an appropriate way to write it.
P3	English and Arabic have different word orders; English is nominal, while Arabic is verbal. This can make deciding when to use a verb or a noun challenging. Also, correctly placing adjectives and adverbs in English sentences can be difficult.
P4	The main challenges are English grammar rules, which can be complex due to various tenses, sentence structures, word order, and limited vocabulary, hindering clear self-expression.

Facing the challenges presented by the conflict in Palestine, I had to rethink the recruitment strategy initially outlined in Chapter 3. Consequently, I turned to social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp groups to connect with potential participants within the Hebron University community. I encouraged them to share the study invitation within their networks, significantly broadening the recruitment reach. I employed purposeful sampling to ensure that I included only individuals who met the study's criteria and were relevant to its objectives.

This focus was primarily on students who had shifted to online learning due to the conflict. To overcome the restrictions imposed by the conflict, all interviews were conducted via Zoom and audio-recorded. This approach provided a safe and effective means for data collection and maintained the data's integrity, allowing the research to proceed smoothly despite the challenging circumstances.

Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis process was cohesive and recursive. The process embraced an integrative methodology that involves comprehending how each facet of the

research procedure influences the dataset's nature, breadth, and substance, which is crucial for the analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Iterative data analysis entails utilizing diverse data sources and methods as integral components of a sense-making process, observing their enhancement as they respond to real-time insights gained (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

As I explored the data, I adopted an inductive approach to identify emerging themes using thematic analysis coding. Thematic analysis involves detecting, examining, and presenting patterns within the dataset (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). My systematic process of data analysis involved the following steps: (a) meticulously preparing the data for analysis by transcribing interviews, (b) conducting an initial review of the data, (c) organizing initial codes into coherent categories, and (d) synthesizing these categories into overarching themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Step 1: Preparation for Data Analysis

In the initial phase of data analysis, I focused on data preparation. I employed Cockatoo, a transcription tool, to convert audio recordings into written transcripts. Verifying accuracy, I compared these transcripts with the original recordings, making necessary amendments for clarity and precision. This process familiarized me with the data. Subsequently, I saved the transcripts using Microsoft Word and sought validation from participants by sharing their respective transcripts for review and potential input. Once confirmed, I organized participants' responses according to research inquiries in a structured matrix.

Step 2: Preliminary Analysis and Coding of Data

Initially, I examined each participant's response to understand the content better, organizing the data by research questions (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Employing the In Vivo process versus coding, I conducted a thorough line-by-line analysis to identify initial codes (Saldaña, 2021). The In Vivo method, which focuses on participants' exact words, was particularly instrumental in highlighting significant terms, thereby capturing the essence of their communication (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This meticulous review of responses allowed me to discern commonalities and differences, ultimately leading to the generation of codes reflecting participants' literal expressions and facilitating a deeper understanding of the data (Saldaña, 2021; Sutton & Austin, 2015). For details, see Table 4.

Table 4

In Vivo Code

Research Question	Interview Question	In Vivo Codes	Sample Excerpts
RQ1: Understand the perception of Arab adult EFL learners learning English sentence structure.	How do students perceive learning English sentence structure?	Engagement with social media for learning	Well, I engage with various content on social media platforms. For instance, I read English news articles and watch videos in English.
		Self-paced learning preference	I prefer individual study as it allows for self-paced learning and focused attention according to personal needs.
		Visualization for understanding	For complex ideas like tenses, I find drawing trees effective. Visualizing tenses as tree branches helps me understand and remember them easily.
		Need for clear explanations.	English language instructors can best support my learning by clearly explaining grammar rules.
Understand students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments.	What do you think is the cause and source of syntactic errors?	Lack of knowledge	The main cause is a lack of comprehensive knowledge of grammar rules.
		Lack of practice, language differences	Students' lack of practice and attention. The significant differences between Arabic and English contribute to these errors, especially in translation.
		Language influence	The influence of the Arabic language may contribute to syntactic errors.
		Incomplete understanding, Mother tongue	I think syntactic errors can arise due to various factors, such as an incomplete understanding of the grammar rules in your mother language.
		Lack of familiarity	My main error was my lack of familiarity with English grammar rules, particularly when composing sentences.

Step 3: Grouping Codes to Categories

Although I managed a significant amount of data, I did not utilize NVivo for assistance as initially planned. NVivo, a software designed for qualitative data analysis, helps researchers organize and analyze data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). However, it does not substitute for the researcher's intuitive understanding of the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I coded the data manually by grouping codes into categories, aiming to engage with the data as a novice qualitative researcher directly. I created a separate row for each

participant's responses to every research and interview question. This structured

approach facilitated data analysis and interpretation of findings (See Appendix G for

more details).

After organizing the initial batch of code based on similarities and patterns, I

proceeded to the next phase, focusing on my research goal: understanding students'

perceptions of learning English sentence structure and common errors in Arabic-to-

English writing assignments. I utilized colors to highlight emerging codes and challenges

related to learning sentence structure. The goal was also to categorize students'

perceptions, ideas, and viewpoints on the challenges of learning English sentence

structure (see Table 5).

I carefully examined the highlighted data using the constant comparative method.

I compared what each participant said and found similar patterns related to my research

questions. I grouped these patterns into categories. Then, I looked closely at these

categories to understand what they meant regarding what all participants shared and how

they related to my research questions. This analysis identified the main patterns I

categorized and interpreted to understand their shared meanings and connections to my

research inquiries.

Table 5

Grouping Codes to Categories

Research Question	Interview Question	Participant	Participant Response	Codes	Categories
RQ1: Understand the perception of Arab adult EFL learners learning English sentence structure.	IQ1: What resources are needed to learn English sentence structure?	P1	I can use books, the internet, or social media. I follow many Instagram accounts that help me with it, and I use ChatGPT, a website that helps me.	Books, internet, social media, apps	Digital resources, social learning
		P2	I primarily rely on my grammar book as a reference and occasionally use a dictionary for unfamiliar words.	Grammar books, dictionary	Traditional resources
		P3	After taking a writing course, I used Grammarly to make corrections and gain insights. I also listen to Grammar Girl podcasts and know about "Write and Voyage" by Thomas Tire.	Grammarly, podcasts, books	Digital tools, audio learning
	IQ1: What do you think is the cause and source of syntactic errors?	P1	The main cause is a lack of comprehensive knowledge of grammar rules.	Lack of knowledge	Grammar understanding
		P2	Students' lack of practice and attention. The significant differences between Arabic and English contribute to these errors, especially in translation.	Lack of practice, language differences	Practice & language gap
		P3	The influence of the Arabic language may contribute to syntactic errors.	Language influence	Linguistic interference

Step 4: Grouping Categories into Themes

In Step 4, I applied inductive reasoning and axial coding to refine and organize the categories into broader themes that addressed my research questions. Axial coding helped me understand how these categories were connected (Saldana, 2021). I developed detailed descriptions of these themes by including excerpts from the interviews, adding depth to my analysis (Saldana, 2021).

I identified 10 main themes across the data, providing insights into the learning experiences of Arab adult EFL learners. For RQ1, which aimed to understand learners' perceptions of learning English sentence structure, the themes identified were linguistic challenges and anxiety, the importance of feedback and practice, strategies for improvement through adaptation in learning for continuous growth, dynamics between collaborative versus autonomous learning, and cross-linguistic influence.

For RQ2, focusing on common syntactic errors in Arabic-to-English writing assignments, the findings were categorized as language influence and interference, cross-linguistic writing challenges, strategies for identifying and revising errors, interlanguage structural dynamics, and challenges of linguistic transfer and direct translations from Arabic to English. These themes showed the complex and dynamic challenges faced by Arab EFL learners as they acquire proficiency in English syntax. Table 6 and Table 7 show how I organized the data codes into themes for each research question.

Table 5

RQ1 Thematic Analysis of Data

Codes	Categories	Themes
Fear of speaking mistakes, difficulty with grammar rules, challenges with vocabulary and pronunciation	Language acquisition, anxiety challenges	Linguistic challenges, anxiety
Translation difficulties, thinking in Arabic while trying to write or speak in English	Cross-language cognitive struggles	Cross-linguistic Influence
Use of digital tools (e.g., language learning apps, Grammarly), utilization of social media, reference to traditional resources (e.g., textbooks), participation in group activities, engagement in individual practice, employment of visual aids	Language learning strategies, resources	Strategies for improvement
Need for instructor and peer feedback, regular speaking and writing practice, and daily use of English.	Effective language learning habits	The importance of feedback and practice
Group learning, collaboration. Autonomy, self-driven	Collaborative learning, autonomy	Collaborative vs. autonomous learning dynamics

Table 6

RQ2 Thematic Analysis of Data

Codes	Categories	Themes
Issue of punctuation marks, run-on sentences, and sentence fragmentation	Syntax and punctuation errors	Cross-linguistic writing challenges
Direct translation issues, lack of adaptation to English syntax, errors in idiomatic expressions	Language transfer and adaptation issues	Translation challenges
Lack of knowledge, lack of practice, language influence, incomplete understanding, lack of familiarity	Challenges stemming from knowledge and practice	Language influence and interference
Word order, verb-noun agreement, sentence structure, translation issues	Syntax and structural concerns	Interlanguage structural dynamics
Reviewing work multiple times, using grammar-checking software, applying instructor feedback	Revision and feedback strategies	Strategies for identifying and revising errors

Discrepant Cases

While collecting and analyzing data, I noticed cases that did not fit the main patterns and questioned potential factors that might have influenced the findings. Most participants had similar experiences and views, but there was one participant whose responses did not quite align with the others. This included their preference for direct translation, which was a notable discrepancy. I double-checked these differences with the participant to ensure accuracy and clarified discrepancies accordingly. The participant expressed:

> Yes, sometimes, especially when I want to add maybe metaphors in English since you know Arabic metaphors and English metaphors are so different, but sometimes, if I find Arabic to translate them word for word, then I remember that it is not right because we need another way of translation.

The participants exhibited a balanced perspective on direct translation. The participant recognized its limitations, such as the inability to capture distinctions accurately. Despite this, the participant found value in it, especially for understanding the content.

Another discrepancy was that participants strongly relied on traditional resources over digital tools. This highlights a preference for traditional study methods despite the widespread availability of digital tools. One participant noted, "I primarily rely on my grammar book as a reference and occasionally use a dictionary for unfamiliar words."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure reliability in qualitative research, researchers must critically assess the study's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, also known as validity, provides a method for

evaluating the rigor of a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The study assesses its

trustworthiness based on four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). All interviews were automatically recorded and

transcribed to ensure accurate data collection (Jones, 2021).

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research involves recognizing complex patterns and

biases, with internal validity reliant on the researcher's ability to interpret data accurately

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Methods like triangulation, member checking, discussing

negative cases, and peer debriefing enhance credibility (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Stahl &

King, 2020). In this study, I employed member checking to ensure interpretative

accuracy, challenge researcher biases, and promote ethical participant relationships, thus

deepening the understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016;

Yin, 2015).

During the informed consent process, I notified participants that they could

engage in member checking through either email or a Zoom conference (Jones, 2021).

Two weeks post-interview, I emailed each participant a transcript, allowing them to

verify its correctness and provide further input if desired. All participants validated the

transcripts and offered no additional comments. Following the completion of all

transcriptions, I began analyzing the data. I then emailed each participant a summary of

the initial findings for verification (Jones, 2021). I also emailed five participants to clear

up certain uncertainties in their responses. After they provided the required clarifications,

I updated the transcripts and sent them back for final approval. The participants confirmed the accuracy of these revised responses.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research, evaluated through detailed descriptions of the study's context, allows readers to judge the applicability of results to other settings by sharing characteristics of the setting, participants, and cultural context (Creswell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). By providing a thick description of these elements, my research aims to enhance the transferability of its findings (Guba, 1981; Lodico et al., 2010).

For this purpose, I included direct quotations from Arab EFL learners' responses when discussing the results and findings. Additionally, I provided details about the number of years participants had studied English at the university and their academic levels. This information helped the researcher or reader assess the relevance and potential applicability to their higher education settings. Specific details about the setting being various universities further enhance the potential for applying the results and findings in diverse educational contexts (Jones, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research, akin to reliability, requires maintaining data stability and the ability to document and track the data collection and interpretation processes, ensuring consistency and stability over time through a reasoned approach aligned with the researcher's theoretical framework (Creswell, 2016; Lodico et al., 2010; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

I consistently analyzed the data to ensure dependability, identifying recurring patterns and themes from participant interviews. Throughout the research, I actively searched for any discrepancies to pinpoint inconsistencies. I maintained a reflective journal to document my decision-making process, biases, analytical methods, and logistical details of the study. Additionally, I enhanced dependability by thoroughly describing the data collection and analysis methods, including audio recording interviews and allowing participants to review the data (Jones, 2021).

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is ensured through triangulation, reflexivity, external audits, and member checks, allowing verification of findings and management of biases (Anney, 2014; Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Creswell, 2016; Guba, 1981; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To guarantee confirmability, I implemented member checks, enabling participants to verify the accuracy of the data and my interpretations (Jones, 2021). I ensured precision by integrating participants' responses into the results and findings. Additionally, I maintained a reflective journal to examine my biases and reflect on the interview responses' content, which supported my data analysis (Jones, 2021).

<div align="center">

Results

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In this section, I discussed the themes derived from my data analysis. It also addressed the core issue that motivated this research: the challenge encountered by Arabic-speaking EFL learners at an Arabian university in mastering English sentence structure for their written assignments. The following research questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of learning English sentence structure?

RQ2: What are students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments?

In this qualitative study, I explored the perspectives of Arabic-speaking EFL learners on the challenges they faced while learning English sentence structure after students completed error analyses of the student's written assignments. I collected and analyzed data through one-on-one semistructured interviews. The analysis led to the identification of several response categories. Specifically, the first research question revealed five themes, while the second research question yielded five themes. In the subsequent sections, I discussed the results of these research questions and the themes that emerged in greater detail.

Regarding RQ1, the study revealed five principal themes regarding Arab adult EFL learners' perceptions of learning English sentence structure: linguistic challenges and anxiety learners experience, the significance of feedback and practice in their educational process, strategies for improvement that involve adapting for ongoing growth, interaction between collaborative and autonomous learning, and cross-linguistic influences on their English proficiency.

Regarding RQ2, which addressed the common syntactic errors in Arabic-to-English writing assignments, the investigation identified several themes: influence and interference from the native language, challenges associated with cross-linguistic writing, strategies learners use to identify and revise errors, dynamics of interlanguage structural development, and challenges related to linguistic transfer and direct translations from

Arabic to English. These themes explained the complex dynamics between learners' native language and their acquisition of English.

RQ1: Understand Students' Perceptions of Learning English Sentence Structure

Theme 1: Linguistic Challenges and Anxiety

I asked Arab adult EFL learners about the common challenges they face while constructing English sentences, as English language students experienced linguistic challenges and anxiety patterns. Several participants pointed out psychological barriers tied to their grammar proficiency. One learner articulated a significant concern, "Yeah, actually, I face some problems with, you know, fearing speaking mistakes and some grammar rules that make me afraid to speak with full mistakes in front of others." This response revealed the fear of error in public speaking, highlighting how anxiety could impede language learning and expression.

Understanding sentence structures also emerged as a notable challenge. A learner explained, "Distinguish whether the sentence is simple, compound, or complex and challenge in an appropriate way to write it." This difficulty with sentence complexity and writing skills showed learners' difficulty adapting to various English sentence types.

Another challenge mentioned was the pace at which native speakers talk, which impacts learners' ability to construct sentences accurately. As one learner said, "I find it hard to keep up with the fast pace of native speakers, which often leads to confusion and errors in my sentence construction." This challenge represented a significant barrier to achieving fluency and understanding.

Grammar rules, particularly articles and prepositions, posed significant difficulties due to their absence in Arabic. One learner noted, "My biggest challenge is using articles and prepositions, which do not exist in Arabic and often confuse me." This struggle highlighted the adaptation challenges learners face when transitioning to English structures.

Verb tense alignment was also challenging, especially in complex narrative structures. A learner mentioned, "The alignment of verb tenses throughout a text is difficult for me, especially when shifting between different narrative times," emphasizing the difficulties in managing tense consistency effectively.

Translation challenges were also highlighted, particularly in maintaining the correct word order. One learner described, "One common challenge is mastering the correct word order, especially when translating from Arabic to English." This issue and difficulties in grammar adaptation, such as using passive constructions and modal verbs, indicated the depth of grammatical hurdles.

However, not all experiences were negative. One advanced student expressed confidence in speaking, noting, "As an advanced student, I do not find many challenges, particularly in speaking. Speaking is my favorite skill, and I have been practicing it for a long time," pointing out how continuous practice can build proficiency and reduce linguistic anxiety.

Theme 2: Cross-Linguistic Influence

I asked Arab adult EFL learners if they think in Arabic when writing in English, revealing significant insights into the cross-linguistic influence on their language

processing. Many learners confirmed that they initially think in Arabic, influencing their English writing. One learner explained, "Sometimes, when looking for ideas to write, I find them in Arabic and translate them into English." This response highlighted a common cognitive processing challenge where learners translated thoughts from their native language, potentially leading to language interference. Several learners expressed that this practice was customary, with one simply stating, "Yes, I always do." This frequent reliance on native language thought patterns revealed the nature of language interference in language learning.

> Cultural and linguistic differences also played a role; as one learner pointed out, Yes, sometimes, especially when I want to add maybe metaphors in English since you know Arabic metaphors and English metaphors are so different, but sometimes, if I find Arabic to translate them word for word, then I remember that it is not right because we need another way of translation.

This response illustrated the complexity of translating cultural concepts and metaphoric language that did not directly align with Arabic and English. Another learner reflected on their learning journey:

> Yes, yes, sometimes it happens, especially when I was in my first year. This was causing a lot of trouble. I found myself stuck in Arabic, so I just translated what I was thinking into English and wrote it down. But it became easier when I spent more time with the language and indulged in it.

This process showed the gradual adaptation to thinking directly in English as familiarity with the language increases.

The translation of basic concepts could also confuse, as illustrated by a learner's example:

> Yes, because there is a difference between our Arabic and English languages. For example, I want to say, "A beautiful car." If I want to think in Arabic, it means "beautiful car." So, I can say "car beautiful." That is why I avoid thinking in Arabic to avoid this.

The sentence structure in Arabic influences the English translation, confirming the direct impact of native language structure on English expression.

These responses emphasized the significant cross-linguistic influence experienced by Arab EFL learners. This influence was exhibited in cognitive processing challenges where the structure and idioms of Arabic impacted the accuracy and natural flow of English sentence construction, pointing out the need for strategies that encourage direct cognitive processing in English to enhance fluency and reduce interference.

Theme 3: Strategies for Improvement: Using Adaptation in Learning for Continuous Growth

I asked Arab adult EFL learners about the resources they use to learn English sentence structure. Students highlighted various strategies for improvement that emphasized adaptation in learning for continuous growth. Learners highlighted diverse resources, emphasizing both digital and traditional media. One learner mentioned using digital tools,

> I can use books, the internet, or social media. I follow many accounts on Instagram that help me with it. I use ChatGPT, a website that helps me paraphrase

my sentences and tells me where the mistakes are. I also rely on dictionaries like

the Longman Dictionary.

This approach emphasized access to diverse learning tools that integrate digital and social

learning platforms to enhance understanding and application of English grammar.

Traditional resources remain fundamental for some learners, with one stating, "I

primarily rely on my grammar book as a reference and occasionally use a dictionary for

unfamiliar words." This reliance on conventional study materials illustrates the ongoing

value of grammar books and dictionaries in mastering English syntax.

The integration of technology and traditional learning resources was a common

theme. For instance, a learner described using modern tools,

Since taking a writing course, I have been using Grammarly, which corrects your

writing but also gives you a way to point out the mistakes and tells you the name

of the error and why it is. I also listen to podcasts like Grammar Girl, which has

over 900 episodes, and I know a book called "Write and Voyage" by Thomas

Tire.

Combining digital tools and audio learning enhances grammatical accuracy and broadens

the learning experience.

Online learning tools incorporating entertainment elements were also valued for

their engaging and practical approach. One learner said, "I use an English proofreader

website and online dictionaries. Additionally, I utilize a website for linguistic checking,

which helps me identify and correct mistakes in my writing. I also watch cartoon movies

that feature formal English dialogue." These resources facilitated learning through practice and engagement, making the process more enjoyable and effective.

The use of social media for informal learning channels was also noted, with one learner saying, "For instance, I follow pages on TikTok and Instagram. These pages offer tutorials on sentence structure, among other things." Social media serves as a practical tool for visual and interactive learning.

These responses emphasized a broad resource used by Arab EFL learners, ranging from traditional textbooks to cutting-edge digital platforms. This digital mix of tools reflected a strategic approach to improving English sentence structure, characterized by a blend of structured materials, interactive exercises, and self-directed learning options that cater to diverse learning styles and needs.

Theme 4: The Importance of Feedback and Practice

I asked Arab adult EFL learners how instructors could best support their learning of English sentence structure, revealing how valuable the feedback and practice were. Many learners emphasized the need for instructors to enhance understanding and confidence by focusing on the structure of grammar rules. One learner stated, "Understanding the structure of grammar rules and sentence structures can improve my performance. It facilitates easier comprehension of sentences and aids in overcoming fear of mistakes or difficulties in tenses vocabulary or pronunciation." This approach highlighted the need for teaching approaches that build comprehension and reduce anxiety.

The instructional techniques suggested by one participant included, "EFL instructors can support students by starting with a general explanation, ensuring understanding across different student levels, providing examples, and assigning homework." This approach aimed to facilitate comprehensive learning and make the content accessible to all learners.

Several responses highlighted the value of practical learning. One learner said, "Instructors should focus more on practical usage than theoretical knowledge. They should use more real-life interactions and less technical grammar instruction." This approach indicated a preference for a practical learning focus, integrating real-life contexts into the learning process to make it more engaging and applicable.

Clarity in instruction, regular practice, and feedback were frequently mentioned. A learner suggested, "First, the instructor has to provide a clear explanation for the grammar rule by offering vivid examples, encouraging regular practice throughout homework or assignments, and giving regular feedback for our written or spoken assignments." This approach reflected the demand for supportive and interactive teaching that helped students internalize the rules through consistent practice and feedback.

Interactive and engaging lessons were also seen as crucial. One learner noted, "Instructors should create interactive and engaging lessons that involve students directly in learning processes, perhaps through collaborative tasks or projects that allow application of sentence structures in varied contexts." This pedagogical strategy fostered an interactive and contextual teaching environment, enhancing engagement and real-world application.

The use of visual aids to clarify sentence construction was another key suggestion. A learner mentioned, "Teachers should instruct students on forming sentences appropriately and accurately. They must offer clear explanations using diagrams and illustrations for sentence structure and provide deep explanations beginning with a subject followed by a verb and then an object." This visual and detailed instructional support helped students grasp complex structures more effectively.

Arab EFL learners' responses highlighted feedback and practice as critical roles in learning English sentence structure. They advocated for a comprehensive, supportive environment in the classroom that incorporates clear explanations, practical application, and continual feedback to overcome the challenges of learning English as a second language.

Theme 5: Collaborative vs. Autonomous Learning Dynamics

I asked Arab adult EFL learners if they preferred group activities or individual study for learning sentence structure. The responses revealed a clear preference for group activities among the majority, proving the benefits of collaborative learning. One learner stated, "I prefer the group. Talking and speaking with others helps you understand information, get it in your mind, and not forget it. Okay, it also probably enables you to get feedback from your friends." Another participant supported this view: "Group activities are better for me as they allow for discussion and different perspectives, which helps me understand better." Despite the preference for group learning, individual study was also greatly appreciated. One learner expressed, "I prefer to study individually as it

allows me to focus on my learning without distractions, at my own pace." This practice highlighted the value some learners place on autonomy and self-paced learning.

Several participants exhibited mixed feelings, appreciating both methods. Comments such as, "I prefer both. Sometimes it is good to study in a group to get different ideas, but I like individual study too because it allows me to focus deeply." Another learner commented, "It depends on the individual's personality and preferences. I am quite social, so I prefer group activities, but I am also adaptable and can learn effectively independently," illustrating learners' various preferences.

The findings revealed that Arab adult EFL learners employed different approaches to mastering English sentence structure, emphasizing the importance of balancing collaborative and autonomous learning dynamics. Learners valued collaborative activities for their interaction and idea exchange benefits, yet they also recognized the significance of individual study for achieving deeper learning and proficiency.

RQ2: **Common Syntactic Errors in Arabic-to-English Writing Assignments**

Theme 1: Cross-Linguistic Writing Challenges

I asked Arab adult EFL learners about the common sentence structure errors they found in their written documents, uncovering various cross-linguistic writing challenges (see Table 8).

Table 7

Common Syntactic Errors in Arabic-to-English Writing Assignments (RQ2)

Error	Definition

Punctuation and Sentence Fragmentation	Involves misuse of punctuation marks, leading to run-on sentences or sentence fragmentation, attributed to differing punctuation rules in Arabic and English.
Verb Tense and Agreement	Learners frequently make errors regarding verb tense and subject-verb agreement, reflecting the complexities of English verb tenses compared to Arabic sentence structure.
Word Order	The syntactic differences between Arabic and English often lead learners to struggle with the correct word order in English sentences, particularly in complex or compound sentence structures.

Many learners pointed to punctuation as a significant area of difficulty, with one learner noting, "Mostly, they will be about punctuation like comma splices.... also have missing commas." This challenge indicated a widespread struggle with the proper use of commas, which impacts clarity and coherence in their writing.

Subject-verb agreement also emerged as a struggle for Arab adult EFL learners. As one learner described, "I found errors related to alphabetical word usage and punctuation.... also, there were many problems with subject-verb agreement." This error highlighted learners' difficulty aligning subject and verb forms, crucial for grammatical accuracy in English.

Another common struggle cited was the consistency of verb tenses. A learner mentioned, "Issues with using commas and periods correctly.... frequently make mistakes with subject-verb agreement and keeping verb tenses consistent." This struggle reflected challenges in maintaining structural integrity and consistency in writing, which were essential for clear communication.

Errors like run-on sentences were also frequently mentioned, emphasizing problems with sentence boundary recognition. One learner pointed out, "Run-on sentences and subject-verb agreements are common errors." This struggle pointed out the difficulties in effectively managing sentence length and structure.

Word order issues also frequently surfaced, complicating sentence clarity and structure. One learner expressed, "I tend to have difficulties with proper punctuation and to keep consistent tense throughout my essays, along with jumbled word order that doesn't align with English syntax rules." This error highlighted the difficulties stemming from the syntactic structure differences between Arabic and English.

Other noted errors included article misuse, incorrect usage of relative pronouns, and inconsistencies in verb tense usage. For example, one response highlighted, "Syntactic errors can include article misuse, incorrect subject-verb agreement, punctuation errors, and confusion in using relative pronouns and verb tenses." Such errors complicate the grammatical correctness and flow of the text, affecting overall readability.

These responses illustrated the complex grammatical and syntactic challenges faced by Arab EFL learners in their English writing, driven by the differences between Arabic and English language structure. These results emphasized the need for targeted instructional strategies tailored to address these specific areas of difficulty.

Theme 2: Challenges of Linguistic Transfer and Direct Translations from Arabic to English

I asked Arab adult EFL learners whether certain aspects of Arabic grammar or sentence construction contributed more to syntactic errors in their English writing assignments. The feedback highlighted significant challenges from linguistic transfer and the difficulties associated with direct translations from Arabic to English.

Learners identified various elements of Arabic grammar that did not align well with English structures, leading to frequent translation errors. For instance, one learner noted, "Certain Arabic grammar rules or sentence structures do not directly translate into English. This challenge included a subject-verb agreement, adjective order, tenses, and adverbs." These specific areas were pivotal, as they often led to misunderstandings and misapplications in English syntax.

Another prevalent struggle was translating verb tenses and modifiers. A learner described, "The influence of Arabic, especially in verb tense usage and modifier placement, contributes to errors when translating from Arabic to English." This response revealed the complex interference between Arabic and English grammatical structures.

Sentence structure differences also posed significant challenges. One learner pointed out, "The main difficulty is the sentence structure difference between Arabic and English, affecting the correct application of rules." Similarly, issues with word order and article usage were frequently mentioned as problematic areas, with one response highlighting, "I find word order and the use of articles particularly challenging due to differences between Arabic and English structures."

Literal translations from Arabic were noted for leading to unnatural English syntax and affecting clarity. As one learner expressed, "Literal translation from Arabic leads to unnatural English syntax, affecting the clarity of written communication." This issue was closely tied to the risks of misinterpreting the original meaning when directly translating complex Arabic sentences into English.

Several participants also discussed how specific Arabic grammar constructs, such as verb conjunctions and modifier placements, significantly impacted English syntax errors. For example, one mentioned, "Differences in word order and the placement of modifiers due to Arabic grammar rules contribute to syntactic errors in English." This experience demonstrated how differences in word order and modifier placement resulting from Arabic grammar rules contributed to syntactic errors in English, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve language proficiency in bilingual individuals.

Theme 3: Strategies for Identifying and Revising Errors

I asked Arab adult EFL learners how they identified syntax errors in their English writing documents, revealing various strategies for identifying and revising errors. Learners employed a mix of traditional and technological methods to spot syntax errors. One learner shared, "I identify syntax errors by recognizing violations of grammatical rules such as sentence structure, verb agreement, and word order. I read sentences aloud and write texts, checking for errors in pronunciation, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure." This method, which combined verbal and written analysis, allowed for a comprehensive check of grammatical correctness.

The use of digital tools was also a common strategy. Another learner stated, "I usually read my document and looked for anything suspicious or unclear. Sometimes, I use online tools like grammar checkers to verify my sentences." This approach highlighted technology integration in proofreading, facilitating more efficient error detection.

Proofreading practices were another effective strategy involving reading and re-reading, often aloud, to capture syntax errors. A learner described the process as follows: "I first read the document to understand the main idea. Then I re-read it slowly, sentence by sentence, and I often read sections out loud to identify syntax issues." This detailed review process ensured thorough comprehension and analysis.

Some learners compared their writing to standard grammar rules and utilized online applications to find inconsistencies, as explained by one learner, "By comparing my writing to standard grammar rules and checking for consistency. I also use apps to find errors." This combination of technology and manual review enhanced the effectiveness of error checking. Feedback from instructors and peers played a crucial role in identifying errors for some learners, "I ask for feedback from my instructors and peers. Besides, I check for errors by reading my writing multiple times," emphasizing the importance of iterative review and external input.

Another observation emphasized the importance of attending to structural elements such as verb tenses and word order, especially for translators working from their native language. One learner highlighted, "Errors are pinpointed by examining verb tenses, sentence structure, and word order. As I frequently translate from my native language, I am prone to errors in these areas, prompting me to be extra vigilant." Recognizing potential challenges in translation aided in focusing on specific areas prone to errors.

These responses illustrated a strategic application of various tools and techniques in error identification. Arab EFL learners leverage modern technologies like grammar

checkers and traditional methods such as reading aloud and seeking feedback to refine
their English syntax, emphasizing a comprehensive approach to improving their writing
skills.

Theme 4: Language Influence and Interference

I asked Arab adult EFL learners what they thought was the cause and source of
syntactic errors in their Arabic-to-English writing assignments. The responses highlighted
several critical factors that contributed to these errors. The challenge identified by the
learners was a foundational lack of grammar knowledge. One learner stated, "The main
cause is a lack of comprehensive knowledge of grammar rules." Similarly, another
learner emphasized a related problem, "The main reason behind my errors was the lack of
familiarity with English grammar rules, particularly in composing sentences."

Practice and language differences were also frequently mentioned. For example,
one learner remarked, "Students' lack of practice and attention. The significant
differences between Arabic and English contributed to these errors, especially in
translation," pinpointing the challenges posed by the structural differences between the
two languages.

The influence of the Arabic language itself was another critical factor. As one
learner put it, "Influence of the Arabic language may contribute to syntactic errors,"
highlighting the direct impact of native language structures on English syntax. This
linguistic interference was shown in various ways, such as literal translations or incorrect
word order. One learner described, "The significant differences in grammar between

Arabic and English languages can lead to nonsensical translations if one solely relies on literal translation."

Errors related to literal translation and the cognitive process of switching between languages were also highlighted. One response illustrated this, "One common challenge is mastering the correct word order, especially when translating from Arabic to English. The sentence structure differences between Arabic and English often confuse arranging words in English sentences." Another learner shared a similar sentiment, "I made errors when switching between languages and in translation. The instructor often explains that certain mistakes arise because of the linguistic contrast between the two languages."

These insights showed the complex interplay of educational challenges, linguistic differences, and cognitive processing difficulties that Arab EFL learners face, emphasizing the critical need for targeted grammatical instruction and practice to bridge these gaps.

Theme 5: Interlanguage Structural Dynamics

I inquired how Arab adult EFL learners believed the influence of Arabic syntax affects the occurrence of syntactic errors in their English writing, uncovering a pattern strongly tied to interlanguage structural dynamics. The responses clearly illustrated the pervasive impact of Arabic syntax on English language construction. One learner noted, "The influence of Arabic syntax often results in incorrect word order and issues with verb and noun agreement when I write in English," highlighting foundational grammatical differences that stem from language transfer effects. Another learner added, "Due to the influence of Arabic, I find myself using Arabic sentence structures in English, which

doesn't always translate well and leads to errors," showing the challenges of cross-language syntax transfer.

Further insights revealed specific aspects of syntax that Arabic influences. For instance, one learner stated, "Arabic influences my English primarily through the placement of adjectives and the construction of complex sentences, which are often reversed in Arabic." This inversion led to linguistic structure differences that challenged conventional English syntax. Additionally, preposition and overall sentence structure errors were common; as one learner explained, "Arabic syntax affects my English writing by causing errors in preposition use and sentence structure due to differences in linguistic rules." Verb tense management was another critical area affected by the influence of Arabic. A learner mentioned, "The structure and use of verbs in Arabic often make me make mistakes in verb tenses when writing in English." The struggle pinpointed how verb usage errors arose from foundational differences in verb tense handling between the two languages.

Pronouns and article usage were also a struggle for Arab adult EFL learners due to language transfer, with one learner commenting, "Arabic's influence causes me to use incorrect pronoun placements and to struggle with the use of articles in English." The structural differences between the languages, especially regarding word order and article usage, significantly contributed to syntactic errors in English texts.

Summary

In Chapter 4 of this qualitative study, I provided a detailed overview of the setting, participants, and the methodologies employed for data collection and analysis,

along with the resulting findings and their implications on the study's trustworthiness. My analysis of interviews with 10 Arabic-speaking EFL learners at Hebron University revealed vital insights into the challenges they faced in learning English sentence structure. The data revealed 10 principal themes. The following was a summary of the themes using research questions.

RQ1 revealed five primary themes concerning Arab adult EFL learners' perceptions of English sentence structure learning: linguistic challenges and anxiety, the importance of feedback, adaptive strategies, collaborative learning, and cross-linguistic influences. RQ2 identified themes on syntactic errors in Arabic-to-English writing, highlighting native language interference, error identification strategies, interlanguage development, and challenges with linguistic transfer.

In Chapter 5, I restated the purpose and nature of the study. I summarized how the findings were interpreted, outlined the limitations, and suggested recommendations for future research. Additionally, I discussed the potential for positive social change resulting from the study and concluded with key insights that captured the study's core themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this study, I aimed to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after the students completed their error analyses of their own writing. Writing proper English sentences is challenging for Arabic-speaking postsecondary students studying English as a foreign language. These learners struggle because Arabic syntactic structure differs significantly from English (Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018; Hamed, 2018; Nasser, 2020; Toba & Noor, 2019).

The problem that prompted the study was that Arabic-speaking EFL learners studying English at an Arabian university struggled to learn English sentence structure for written assignments. There was also a gap in the literature on how Arabic-speaking EFL students relied on the sentence structure of their dominant language and how they perceived the errors when conducting their error analysis. Students were often passive participants in these studies, defined by categories and numbers (Rass, 2015). In my research, students played an active role in correcting their errors, empowering them, increasing their motivation and engagement, and offering valuable insights into effective learning techniques.

I conducted a basic qualitative study using semistructured interviews to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after the students completed their error analyses of their own writing. The study included a purposive sample of 10 adult Arabic-speaking students

majoring in English at an Arabian university to address and respond to the research questions. The central insights of this study arose from the participant's own words, which were initially organized into codes and then grouped into categories and emerging themes.

The study's key findings indicated that Arab adult EFL learners encountered linguistic challenges and anxiety from grammatical disparities between Arabic and English, worsened by direct translations. To overcome these challenges, learners employed diverse strategies, such as digital tools, social media, textbooks, and group activities. Instructor feedback and self-review were pivotal in addressing complex sentence construction issues and enhancing English proficiency.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I compared the results with the conceptual framework and the peer-reviewed literature outlined in Chapter 2. The analysis was structured according to the research questions.

RQ1: Understand the Perception of Arab Adult EFL Learners Learning English Sentence Structure

The initial findings of this study revealed that Arab adult EFL learners perceived significant linguistic challenges, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which contribute to heightened anxiety. Studies by Alghazo and Alshraideh (2020) and Hussain and Abdullah (2019) corroborated these difficulties, especially in mastering English sentence structures influenced by their native Arabic. This observation resonated with the lack of confidence and its impact on communication, as highlighted by Alghazo

and Alshraideh. This linguistic interference undermined learners' confidence and impeded their language proficiency and academic success.

The findings aligned with Corder's (1967) error analysis theory, which emphasized recognizing the influence of learners' native language on second language acquisition. This study's observations on learning English sentence structure challenges due to Arabic grammatical influences corroborated Corder's framework. Similarly, Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory, which suggested that learners developed an interim linguistic system on the path to full language proficiency, shed light on interference issues where learners had struggled with English structures because of direct translations from Arabic.

The second finding of this study revealed that Arab adult EFL learners perceived significant challenges in translating their thoughts from Arabic to English, which often resulted in incorrect sentence structure. This issue resonated with the observations made by Ngangbam (2016), who identified these errors as stemming from translating Arabic thought patterns into English while neglecting structural and grammatical differences. Al-Sobhi (2019) also corroborated these findings, highlighting learners' challenges in translating thoughts directly from Arabic, leading to frequent syntactic errors, such as improper verb tenses and sentence structure mismatches.

Corder's (1967) theory explained these difficulties, revealing that errors provide insight into the learning process of a second language and can help pinpoint areas where learners struggle with language structures. Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory further supported this, suggesting that transitioning from Arabic to English involved developing

an intermediary linguistic system that may not have fully accommodated English's structural and grammatical norms. These processes often hindered comprehension and expression in the target language.

The third finding of this study indicated that Arab adult EFL learners perceived various improvement strategies as beneficial for continuous growth in language skills. These strategies included utilizing digital tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, engaging with social media platforms, referring to textbooks, participating in group activities, engaging in individual practice sessions, and leveraging visual aids. This finding aligned with the emphasis of other researchers on the significance of utilizing diverse methods to enhance language learning. For instance, Diallo (2014) demonstrated how technology tools like tablets and apps supported EFL learners' self-directed learning. Similarly, Nguyen and Terry (2017) found that EFL learners utilized digital tools, textbooks, and visual aids to enhance their language proficiency.

Altun and Sabah (2020) also proved the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies based on multiple intelligences in enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. Furthermore, the importance of individual practice sessions, as highlighted by Bukit (2020), Sani and Rosnawati (2022), and Tarone (2012), confirmed the critical role of independent learning in deepening language understanding and enhancing proficiency. The diversity of these approaches reflected Corder's (1967) and Selinker's (1972) theories, which suggested that error analysis and interlanguage development were crucial in adapting learning strategies that addressed the unique challenges of language learners.

The fourth finding of the study revealed that Arab adult EFL learners perceived feedback and practice as crucial elements in their language learning journey. Learners relied on feedback from instructors and peers to correct errors effectively. This observation aligned with Corder's (1981) error analysis theory, which asserted that errors provided valuable feedback for instructors and learners. Furthermore, Oladejo (1993) found that 61% of students preferred error feedback for self-correction, emphasizing its significance in learning. Additionally, engaging actively with errors empowered learners to correct errors with guidance, activating their linguistic competence (Makino, 1993). Independent practice, as advocated by scholars such as Bukit (2020), Sani and Rosnawati (2022), and Tarone (2012), along with Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory, emphasized the importance of feedback in guiding learners through the concept of interlanguage, where errors reflected transitional linguistic systems. These findings highlighted the necessity of tailored feedback and consistent practice in fostering language acquisition among Arab adult EFL learners.

The fifth finding of the study highlighted diverse perspectives on learning preferences, specifically those of a collaborative versus autonomous learning dynamic. These practices illustrated the complexity of language acquisition processes among learners, a diversity that was effectively interpreted through Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1981) error analysis frameworks.

Several learners preferred group learning, highlighting the benefits of discussing and sharing information, facilitating a deeper understanding and retention of knowledge. This preference aligned with Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory, which argues that

language learning is a repetitive process where learners develop an interim language system that assimilates elements from their native and target languages. Collaborative environments provided a platform for learners to experiment with this interim language, receive immediate feedback, and observe peer responses, which were critical for refining their linguistic hypotheses (Selinker, 1972).

Conversely, some learners favored individual study, highlighting their ability to learn independently without distractions. This preference supported Corder's (1981) error analysis, which suggested that errors were integral to learning and should be analyzed deeply by the learner. Autonomous learning settings allow individuals to engage more thoroughly with their mistakes, facilitating a deeper personal understanding of language structures without the immediate influence of peers and promoting a focused and self-paced learning approach (Corder, 1981).

RQ2: Common Syntactic Errors in Arabic-to-English Writing Assignments

The sixth finding revealed significant cross-linguistic writing challenges perceived by adult Arab EFL learners, namely punctuation errors, verb tense inconsistencies, and word order issues stemming from disparities between Arabic and English structures. These findings aligned with observations from other researchers, who noted that learners frequently misused punctuation marks due to linguistic challenges between Arabic and English. For example, commas were often replaced with conjunctions common in Arabic, such as *and* (Alasmri & Kruger, 2018; Azmi et al., 2019).

These observations were consistent with those of other researchers who identified similar challenges. Specifically, learners struggled with maintaining tense consistency, particularly with the present perfect tense, which is absent in Arabic (Al-Huraithi, 2021; Al-Mudhi, 2019). Additionally, learners often faced difficulties with sentence structure, frequently translating directly from Arabic and thus disrupting the natural flow of English syntax (Abi Samra, 2003).

These challenges reflected the principles of Corder's (1981) error analysis theory, which suggested that errors made by learners were not merely mistakes but valuable indicators that provided insights into their understanding of the second language. By analyzing these errors, educators could better comprehend learners' interlanguage system and how it deviated from the target language norms (Corder, 1981).

These findings also resonated with Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory. This theory emphasizes that learners developing language skills create a transitional system called interlanguage, which is influenced by both their native language and the target language structures. This system helped explain why learners might have reverted to familiar structures from their native language when encountering challenges in the target language, leading to the observed errors (Selinker, 1972).

The study's seventh finding highlighted the challenges Arab adult EFL learners face due to linguistic transfer and direct translations from Arabic to English, influenced by the structural differences between the two languages, particularly in syntax and sentence construction. Researchers like Alghazo and Alshraideh (2020) and Erdocia and Laka (2018) confirmed that the differences in verb placement and agreement, from

Arabic's verb-subject-object (VSO) structure to English's subject-verb-object (SVO) order, often lead to syntactic errors. Alsamaadani (2010) supported these findings, noting frequent syntactic errors as learners applied Arabic norms to English. These challenges were consistent with Corder's (1981) error analysis theory, suggesting that such errors indicate learners' attempts to translate cognitive understanding from their first to a second language. Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory further indicated that these syntactic differences influence the development of an intermediate linguistic system blending elements from both languages. Additionally, studies by Hashim et al. (2021) and Hussain and Abdullah (2019) confirmed these findings, emphasizing the impact of L1 structural norms on L2 syntax acquisition.

The eighth finding of this study revealed that Arab adult EFL learners effectively utilized strategies such as review tactics, grammar-checking tools, and instructor feedback to identify and revise errors, navigating the linguistic barriers between Arabic and English. This approach aligned with Corder's (1981) error analysis model, emphasizing the importance of systematic error correction for enhanced language acquisition. Similarly, Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory highlighted how these strategies helped learners develop a personalized version of English, adapting it over time.

Al-Khresheh (2010) confirmed the effectiveness of repetitive revisions in helping Arab learners master English syntax, aligning with our study's results. Additionally, Hussain and Abdullah (2019) highlighted the critical role of instructor feedback. Their findings validated that timely and constructive feedback is essential for learners to

identify and correct syntactic errors. This practice supports our study's emphasis on error-correction strategies as critical tools for overcoming linguistic barriers between Arabic and English.

The ninth finding revealed that Arab adult EFL learners identified language influence and interference as significant sources of syntactic errors. This observation aligned with Selinker's (1972) and Corder's (1981) theories. Learners attributed these errors to major differences between Arabic and English grammatical structures, particularly in sentence construction and word order, often leading to direct translations from Arabic that mirrored grammatical patterns of their native language. Such errors illustrated a transitional linguistic system termed *interlanguage* by Selinker (1972), reflecting influences from native language structures and developing English proficiency.

Corder's (1981) error analysis theory framed these errors as insightful indicators of linguistic development rather than mere failures. This analysis helps educators understand the challenges of linguistic interference, where first-language elements negatively affect second-language acquisition. Research by Alasmri and Kruger (2018) and Azmi et al. (2019) supported these findings, noting the misuse of punctuation typical of Arabic structure. Additionally, Al-Huraithi (2021) and Al-Mudhi (2019) confirmed that maintaining tense consistency was challenging due to the absence of certain tenses in Arabic, underscoring Corder's view that errors provide crucial insights into learners' interlanguage systems.

The tenth finding of the study revealed that Arab adult EFL learners perceived interlanguage structural dynamics and the influence of Arabic syntax as significant

contributors to syntactic errors in their English writing. This perception was consistent

with Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1981) error analysis model,

demonstrating a deep interconnection between the learners' native language structures

and their second language acquisition processes. Participants reported that common

errors, such as incorrect word order, verb and noun agreement issues, and misuse of

prepositions and articles, indicated a strong transfer of syntactic rules from Arabic to

English. These errors reflected the interlanguage system learners developed while

navigating the differences between their native language and English.

Supporting these findings, Al-Huraithi (2021) and Al-Mudhi (2019) noted that

maintaining tense consistency posed significant challenges for Arab learners,

underscoring the impact of missing tenses in Arabic on English language acquisition.

Additionally, Alghazo and Alshraideh (2020) and Erdocia and Laka (2018) confirmed

that structural differences in sentence construction between Arabic and English often led

to translation errors, aligning the current findings and reinforcing the practical

implications of language transfer.

Limitations of the Study

This study's scope and findings were subject to several limitations that warrant

careful consideration. Initially targeting second-year English majors at Hebron

University, the sample had to be expanded due to recruitment challenges caused by the

ongoing war in Gaza. Recruitment was conducted online using Hebron University's

resources, introducing greater demographic variability across different academic years

and backgrounds. This expansion, while enriching the dataset, could impact the

uniformity and interpretability of the findings. Additionally, excluding instructors'

perspectives was crucial to educational dynamics, and the study's confinement to a single

semester limited the comprehensiveness of the insights. They restricted the observation of

long-term educational impacts.

The ongoing conflict also affected participant engagement and response

reliability, introducing variables that could have skewed the data. Given these factors,

while the study offered valuable initial insights, its findings should be interpreted

cautiously. Future research would benefit from including instructors' perspectives,

extending the study duration, and employing a more controlled sampling strategy to

improve the generalizability and depth of the educational insights gained.

Recommendations

Building on the findings of the study, I suggest several recommendations to

enhance the English language learning experience for Arab adult EFL learners:

To address the diversity of learner experiences and instructional methods, I

recommend including a broader range of perspectives in future research. Particularly, the

viewpoints of instructors are vital. Instructors who implement language learning

strategies can provide invaluable insights into the practical aspects of error correction

techniques and their effectiveness in real classroom settings. Including these perspectives

would enrich our understanding and lead to more effective teaching approaches tailored

to the needs of Arab EFL learners.

The current study's duration, limited to a single semester, presents an opportunity

for extension. I propose a longitudinal study spanning multiple semesters or even a full

academic year to better understand the long-term impacts of various teaching interventions. Future researchers could examine how language skills endure over time and pinpoint effective learning strategies with lasting benefits for students.

I also recommend integrating advanced digital tools, which presents a promising avenue for enhancing language acquisition. Testing the effectiveness of interactive feedback tools like Grammarly and ChatGPT in improving English syntax understanding and retention could pave the way for advancements in digital learning environments. Future research could explore optimal strategies for integrating these tools into education settings, potentially enhancing accessibility and engagement in learning significantly.

Finally, I suggested using platforms like Instagram and TikTok to learn languages through interactive challenges and language games. This approach could potentially revolutionize engagement in language education. Future research could explore how these features on social media platforms can enhance engagement and language proficiency, potentially modernizing language learning for the digital age.

Implication

The research results have the potential for significant social change, as they shed light on the challenges faced by Arab adult EFL learners in acquiring English syntax. The implications of the research on the syntactic errors made by Arab adult EFL learners could provide valuable insights for educational strategies tailored to their specific needs. This study emphasized the importance of understanding the influence of native language structures on English language acquisition. The study suggests several practical implications for both learners and educators.

Firstly, the findings highlight the need for targeted instructional strategies that address the common errors related to direct translation and structural differences between Arabic and English. Educators can use these insights to develop teaching materials that focus on the most frequent error types identified, such as issues with verb tenses, word order, and articles, enhancing the grammatical accuracy of their students' English.

Additionally, the study shows the potential benefits of integrating technology and digital tools into the learning process. These tools can provide students with immediate feedback on their writing, enabling them to identify and correct errors independently. This approach improves their understanding of English syntax and encourages a more proactive role in their language-learning journey.

In addition, the research findings advocate for increased practice opportunities in varied and realistic contexts. By engaging in more comprehensive practice sessions that mimic real-life language use, learners can better assimilate the grammatical structures of English, reducing the interference of their native linguistic patterns.

Finally, the research could foster positive social change by improving English mastery among Arab adult EFL learners, preparing them for better academic and professional outcomes. Enhanced English skills are crucial for academic success and professional advancement in a globalized world, where proficiency in English often correlates with better job opportunities and improved socioeconomic status.

Conclusion

The findings from this study, aimed at understanding Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after

completed error analyses of their writing, were identified across 10 themes: linguistic challenges and anxiety, the importance of feedback and practice, strategies for improvement through adaptation in learning for continuous growth, collaborative versus autonomous learning dynamics, and cross-linguistic influence. For the second research question, focusing on common syntactic errors in Arabic-to-English writing assignments, the findings were categorized as follows: language influence and interference, cross-linguistic writing challenges, strategies for identifying and revising errors, interlanguage structural dynamics, and challenges of linguistic transfer and direct translations from Arabic to English. The themes emerged through analyzing data from 10 participants at a private university.

The study utilized Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory and Corder's (1974) error analysis theory as conceptual frameworks. These frameworks provided the structure and guidance for investigating Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the difficulties in mastering English sentence structure and answering the research questions. The study's data aligned with and extended current research about postsecondary Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of learning English sentence structure. Students gained insights into the significant challenges in mastering English sentence structure, particularly influenced by their native Arabic language. They recognized the importance of diverse learning methods, feedback, and practice in overcoming these challenges and improving their language proficiency. The results suggested a need for diverse strategies to enhance English learning for Arab adult EFL learners, including using digital tools like

Grammarly, exploring educational activities on social media, implementing AI-driven

feedback systems, integrating error analysis tools, and adopting hybrid learning models.

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Appendix A: Permission Letter

676 Asma St. Building, 28. Zone 90.
Doha, Qatar.

Date: 02/12/2024

Dear Dr. Raghad,

My name is Mohammad Adam. I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Education

Program. I kindly request your permission to conduct a doctoral research study titled

Postsecondary Arabic-Speaking English as a Foreign Language Learners' Perceptions of

Learning English Sentence Structure. The intention is to understand Arabic-speaking

EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after

students conduct error analyses of their own writing.

The study involves conducting semistructured interviews to understand students'

perceptions of learning English sentence structure and the syntactic errors they receive

from their instructors in their written documents. I want to invite interested undergraduate

students to participate in my study. Participation is completely voluntary, and students

may withdraw from the study at any time.

The study is completely confidential and anonymous. Therefore, you do not need to

provide the student's name or other identifying information. I am looking for second-year

undergraduate students majoring in English as a foreign language. The study population

is a mixed-gender sample of 12 participants.

If you are interested, please contact me to discuss your endorsement further. I look

forward to your contribution to this study.

Thank you,

Mohammad Adam

Doctoral Student

Ph.D. in Education- Reading, Literacy, Assessment & Evaluation

Walden University

Mohammmad.adam@waldenu.edu

Appendix B: Invitational Letter to Participate in the Research

Doha, Qatar.

Date:03/01/2024

Dear Prospective Participant:

Invitation to Participate in Doctoral Research

       I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Education at Walden University, Minnesota, USA. For my dissertation, I am interested in understanding Arabic-speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' perception of the challenges in learning English sentence structure after students conduct error analyses of their own writing. There is a lack of research on the linguistic syntactic challenges postsecondary Arabic-speaking EFLs face when learning to speak and write in English. This research is significant because my research will expand the postsecondary and adult language learning research through error analysis by focusing on syntactic errors in simple English sentence structure. You are therefore invited to participate in research and contribute significantly to advancing education for Arab adult EFL language learning. Below are brief descriptions of key components of the research to guide your decision.

Background to the Study

       The English language is a challenging syntactic structure for Arabic-speaking adult EFL learners. Researchers compared the sentence structures in Arabic and English and noted that Arabic might accept the word orders subject-verb-and-object (SVO) and verb-subject-and-object (VSO). However, English word order within sentences and grammatical patterns relies on syntax and meaning. Although researchers have investigated this issue, the topic has not been explored in this way. Researchers have used error analysis to examine how Arab EFL students learn English. Students are often passive participants in these studies, defined by categories and numbers. However**, my study will allow students to have an active role in learning correct sentence structure by identifying and documenting their errors with corrections using a traditional model of Corder's error analysis (EA)**

Purpose of the Study.

       The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students complete their error analyses of their own writing.

Criteria for Participation

Prospective participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Second-year English major students at Hebron University.
2. Whose first language is Arabic and who learn English as a foreign language.

Data Collection

I will use semistructured interviews to collect the data. Data will be collected from September through December (one semester). The interview will be conducted via the Zoom platform at a time that is convenient for you. This medium is convenient, cost-effective, and easily accessible.

Possible Benefits You May Gain from Participation:
1. Understand Arab EFL learners' perception of learning English sentence structure.
2. Understand the most common syntactic errors in sentence structure.
3. Gain insight into the sources and causes of syntactic errors in sentence structure to avoid those potential errors.
4. Reflexively evaluate your level of competency on the topic.

Confidentiality

All data gathered for this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your name, other marks of identification, and details of your responses will be accessible only to me and other individuals guiding this research. Other confidentiality issues will be detailed in the consent form.

I trust you will embrace this great opportunity to participate in this research.

Best regards,

Mohammad Adam
Mohammad Adam
Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Title of Study: Postsecondary Arabic-Speaking EFL Learners' Perceptions of Learning English Sentence Structure.
Date: 03/01/2024
Time of Interview:
Interviewer: Mohammad Adam
Interviewee (alphabetic pseudonyms):

Greetings:

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview for my doctoral study. My name is Mohammad Adam, and I will be conducting the interview. I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. This interview aims to learn more about your experiences learning English sentence structure. In addition, you will allow me to collect data for my research by allowing me to do so. I invited you to participate in the study because you are a second-year English major at Hebron University. Your first language is Arabic, and you are learning English as a foreign language.

Please remember that your participation in this study is confidential and voluntary. I will keep your name and all other personal information confidential. However, please remember that you can revoke your consent during the process. I will delete all your information and appropriately dispose of it. This interview will last between 30 and 45 minutes, and with your permission, it will be audio-recorded. By recording the interview, I can more precisely transcribe the words, ensuring better accuracy in capturing your responses. Please speak loudly and clearly during the interview to ensure that responses are adequately captured. Before I start recording, do you have any concerns or questions about this study?"
Checklist:
____Participant submitted consent via personal email.
___ Participant is interested in moving forward with study participation. (If not, stop here, thank the participant, and follow procedures to destroy participant information).

Interview Norms:

Speak from the I perspective.
Please do not reveal other people's names, positions at the university, or any other private information. Ask if you need more information or if a question is unclear to you. Please remember that you are free to discontinue your participation in the study at any time. Before we continue, do you have any questions? Do you want to move forward?"

Background/Purpose:

"The purpose of this interview is to better understand your perceptions, ideas, and viewpoints on the challenges of learning English sentence structure. I encourage you to express your thoughts openly and be as specific as possible. I will take notes and record this interview to ensure I do not miss anything. I will be reading the questions I prepared in advance. However, if I require more information or you to explain something, I might also ask follow-up questions."

"Do you have any questions? Do I have your approval to continue with this interview and recording?"

General Questions:

How long have you been studying English as a foreign language?
Is Arabic your first language?

Interview questions to address RQ1: Understand the perception of Arab adult EFL learners learning English sentence structure.

1. What are the common challenges you face while constructing English sentences as an English language student?
2. What resources are needed to learn English sentence structure?
3. How do you perceive the resources available to learn English sentence structure?
4. In your experience, what specific resources do you believe are essential for learning English sentence structure, and how do you perceive the effectiveness of the available resources for this purpose?
5. Do you find yourself thinking in Arabic when writing in English?
6. Why is it essential to learn sentence structures?

Interview questions to address RQ2: Understand students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments.

1. What do you think is the cause and source of syntactic errors?
2. What do you think are the main syntactic error types?
   Can you make a list of 5 syntactic errors in writing?
3. How do you identify syntax errors?
4. Explain these syntactic errors.

Possible Prompts

Could you give me an example of that?

Kindly expand on what you just stated.
Can you explain how those functions?
Can you elaborate on that for me?

Closing Questions

"Do you have any further information you want to share with me to understand better how you perceive learning sentence structure and common syntactic errors? Finally, before we end this interview, is there anything you want me to clarify regarding this research?"

Closing

"I want to express my gratitude for your time today. I am grateful you participated in this research and gave me your genuine input. You may still decide to stop participating at any time. I want to remind you that your responses will be kept private. I will get back to you on the phone in a week to review my notes and transcribe them so you can check them for accuracy. The call could last for 20 minutes. Can I call you for a follow-up call? Have a good day, and thanks ag

Appendix D: Research Flyer

RESEARCH FLYER

SEEKING ARABIC-SPEAKING EFL LEARNERS FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

CONTACT

To become a part of this study, please contact Mohammad Adam; start with your name and interest. Your participation will be strictly confidential. Email Address:
Mohammad.adam@waldenu.edu

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION CRITERION

- Second-year English major students at Hebron University.
- Participants whose first language is Arabic and those studying English as a foreign language.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This is a new study called" Post-Secondary Arabic-Speaking English as a Foreign Language Learners' Perceptions of Learning English Sentence Structure."

Purpose of the study

This basic qualitative study aims to understand Arabic-speaking EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges in learning English sentence structure when students complete their error analyses of their own writing.

EXPECTATION- YOUR IDENTITY IN THE STUDY WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS

- 30—45-minute interview via Zoom
- The interview process will take place from September 21 to December 21, 2023.

COMPENSATION

I appreciate your valuable time and willingness to share your experience learning English sentence structure. In appreciation of your assistance with this research study, you will receive a $ 30.00 gift card.

Appendix E: Data Collection Timeline

Timeframe	Data Collection Task
Weeks 1-2	Recruitment of study participants with an online invitation and consent form emailed to Arab adult EFL learners
Week 3	Obtaining consent forms, scheduling interviews, and considering further participant recruitment.
Week 4-6	Conducting initial interviews via Zoom.
Week 7	Analyzing data to create better follow-up interview questions starting initial interview meetings.
Week 8-9	Conducting follow-up interviews using Zoo
Week 10	Wrapping up with participants by emphasizing data privacy, anonymous participation in research analysis and reporting, and the secure handling of all documents, including shredding all data collection materials after completion. Conducting data analysis and member checks.
Week 11	Data analysis: member checks

Appendix F: Sample of Data Analysis

RQ1: Understand the perception of Arab adult EFL learners learning English sentence structure. How can EFL instructors best support your learning of English sentence structure?

Overarching Theme: The Importance of Feedback and Practice

Part. #	Participant Response	Codes	Categories	Sub-Themes
1	"Understanding the structure of grammar rules and sentence structures can improve my performance. It facilitates easier comprehension of sentences and aids in overcoming fear of mistakes or difficulties in tenses vocabulary or pronunciation."	Understanding grammar rules, facilitates easier comprehension, overcoming the fear of mistakes	Teaching Approach, Learning Challenges	Enhancing Understanding and Confidence
2	"AFL instructors can support students by starting with a general explanation ensuring understanding across different student levels providing examples and assigning homework."	General explanation, ensuring understanding, providing examples, assigning homework	Instructional Techniques, Homework Assignment	Facilitating Comprehensive Learning
3	"Instructors should focus more on practical usage rather than theoretical knowledge. They should use more real-life interactions and less technical grammar instruction."	Practical usage, real-life interactions, less technical grammar	Teaching Methods, Student Engagement	Practical Learning Focus
4	"First, the instructor has to provide a clear explanation for the grammar rule by offering vivid examples, encouraging regular practice throughout homework or assignments, and giving regular feedback for our written or spoken assignments."	Clear explanation, vivid examples, regular practice, regular feedback	Instructional Clarity, Practice, and Feedback	Supportive and Interactive Teaching
5	"Teachers need to use simple and understandable explanations, provide plenty of examples, and encourage constant practice with direct feedback on errors."	Simple explanations, plenty of examples, constant practice, direct feedback	Teaching Style, Feedback Mechanism	Enhancing Engagement and Understanding
6	"Instructors should create interactive and engaging lessons that involve students directly in learning processes, perhaps through collaborative tasks or projects that allow application of sentence structures in varied contexts."	Interactive lessons, engaging lessons, collaborative tasks, application in varied contexts	Pedagogical Strategies, Student Participation	Interactive and Contextual Teaching
7	"English language instructors can best support my learning by clearly explaining grammar rules, offering constructive feedback on written assignments, and encouraging practice through interactive activities. Real-life examples and context-specific exercises can also enhance comprehension."	Clearly explaining grammar rules, constructive feedback, interactive activities, real-life examples	Instructional Methods, Feedback and Practice	Comprehensive Supportive Environment

Part. #	Participant Response	Codes	Categories	Sub-Themes
8	"Teachers should instruct students on forming sentences appropriately and accurately. They need to offer clear explanations using diagrams and illustrations for sentence structure and provide deep explanations beginning with a subject followed by a verb and then an object."	Clear explanations, diagrams and illustrations, deep explanations	Teaching Techniques, Visual Aids	Visual and Detailed Instructional Support
9	"Instructors should encourage more practice, such as making presentations compulsory to overcome students' fears. Giving more homework like journaling or writing essays would be helpful. Additionally, for learning English sentence structure more practice and exposure to native speakers' speech and professional writing are essential."	More practice, presentations compulsory, journaling, writing essays, exposure to native speakers	Teaching Strategy, Student Activities	Comprehensive Practice and Exposure
10	"EFL instructors can provide clear explanations, examples, and constructive feedback to help us improve our sentence structure skills, especially in electronic education settings. Additionally, it is helpful when instructors offer varied tasks and exercises, ensuring that learning is not monotonous."	Clear explanations, examples, constructive feedback, varied tasks and exercises	Instructional Methods, Digital Education	Enhancing Learning through Diverse Approaches

RQ2: Common Syntactic Errors in Arabic-to-English Writing Assignments. What do you think is the cause and source of syntactic errors?

Overarching Theme: Cross-Linguistic Challenges in Translation between Arabic and English

Part. #	Response	Codes	Categories	Sub-Theme
1	"The main cause is a lack of comprehensive knowledge of grammar rules."	Lack of knowledge	Grammar understanding	Learning obstacles
2	"Students' lack of practice and attention. The significant differences between Arabic and English contribute to these errors, especially in translation."	Lack of practice, Language differences	Practice & language gap	Translation and comprehension
3	"Influence of the Arabic language may contribute to syntactic errors."	Language influence	Linguistic interference	Language transfer challenges
4	"I think syntactic errors can arise due to various factors such as an incomplete understanding of the grammar rules in your mother language."	Incomplete understanding, Mother tongue	Educational challenges	Grammar rule acquisition
5	"The main reason behind my errors was the lack of familiarity with English grammar rules particularly in composing sentences."	Lack of familiarity	Grammar rules	Sentence composition difficulties
6	"The significant differences in grammar between Arabic and English languages can lead to nonsensical translations if one solely relies on literal translation."	Grammar differences, Literal translation	Translation issues	Inadequate language adaptation
7	"One common challenge is mastering the correct word order especially when translating from Arabic to English. The sentence structure differences between Arabic and English often confuse arranging words in English sentences."	Word order, Translation challenges	Structural differences	Cognitive and linguistic processing
8	"Lack of grammar understanding and errors from literal translations from Arabic to English."	Grammar understanding, Literal translation	Translation errors	Misinterpretation
9	"I made errors when switching between languages and in translation. The instructor often explains that certain mistakes arise because of the linguistic contrast between the two languages."	Language switching, Translation errors	Interpretation issues	Language use confusion
10	"Lack of comprehensive knowledge and influence of Arabic syntax."	Knowledge gaps, Syntax influence	Educational barriers	Syntax and semantics issues

Appendix G: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

General Questions:
1. **How long have you been studying English as a foreign language?**
2. **Is Arabic your first language?**
3. **In what contexts do you typically use English dail**
4. **Are there specific aspects of English language learning besides sentence structure that you find particularly challenging or rewarding?**

Interview questions to address RQ1*: Understand the perception of Arab adult EFL learners learning English sentence structure.*

1. **What are the common challenges you face while constructing English sentences as an English language student?**
   o Can you provide specific examples of sentences or situations where you encounter difficulties?
   o How do these challenges impact your overall confidence in using English?
   o Are there specific grammar rules or sentence structures that you find particularly challenging?

2. **How can EFL instructors best support your learning of English sentence structure?**

   o What specific actions or strategies can instructors take to support your learning of English sentence structure better?

3. **What resources are needed to learn English sentence structure?**
   o Can you share specific books, websites, or apps that you've found helpful in learning English sentence structure?
   o
4. **Do you find yourself thinking in Arabic when writing in English?**

   o In your experience, do certain writing tasks make it more challenging to switch your thinking to English?
   o How do you handle situations where there might not be a direct equivalent between Arabic and English sentence structures?

5. **Why is it important to learn sentence structures?**

   o How do you believe a strong understanding of sentence structures contributes to effective communication in English?

- o Can you share an example of a situation where knowing sentence structures helped you express yourself more clearly in English?

6. **How do you practice constructing English sentences in your everyday life?**
   - o Can you share simple, practical activities or habits that improve your sentence-building skills?

7. **Are there specific words or phrases in English that you find challenging to use in sentences?**
   - o Can you give examples of words or expressions you sometimes struggle to include in your sentences?
   - o How do you overcome these challenges, and are there any strategies you find helpful in expanding your vocabulary?

8. **In learning English sentence structure, do visuals or diagrams play a role in comprehension?**

   - o Have you ever used visual aids or diagrams to understand how English sentences are structured?
   - o Can you share an experience where a visual representation helped you grasp a particular aspect of sentence structure?

9. **Do you prefer group activities or individual study when learning about sentence structures?**
   - o Are there benefits you find in studying sentence structures with others, such as classmates or language partners?

Interview questions to address RQ2: Understand students' perceptions of the common syntactic errors that error analysis of their documents reveals about Arabic-to-English writing assignments.

5. **What do you think is the cause and source of syntactic errors?**

   - Identify factors contributing to syntactic errors and discuss their typical sources in written language.

6. **What do you think are the main syntactic error types?**

   - Outline key categories of syntactic errors, providing brief descriptions for each.

7. **What are the common sentence structure errors you found in your written documents?**

- Point out specific sentence structure errors in your writing and explain their effects on document quality.

8. How do you identify syntax errors?

- Share methods for identifying and correcting syntax errors in your writing process.

9. Explain some syntactic errors in your written document.

- Share instances of syntactic errors you've noticed in your work. Describe how these errors influence the overall clarity and coherence of your documents.

10. How do you believe the influence of Arabic syntax affects the occurrence of syntactic errors in your English writing?

- o Can you provide examples of situations where the influence of Arabic syntax led to specific syntactic errors in your English writing?
- o In what ways do you actively work to balance the influence of Arabic syntax and adhere to English sentence structures?

11. Do you think certain Arabic grammar or sentence construction aspects contribute more to syntactic errors in English writing assignments?

- o Can you pinpoint specific aspects of Arabic grammar that you find particularly challenging when writing in English?
- o Are there specific strategies you employ to overcome challenges arising from the influence of Arabic grammar on your English writing?

12. How do you approach revising when addressing syntactic errors in your written assignments?
- o Can you walk me through the steps you take when revising a document to identify and correct syntactic errors?
- o Are there specific tools or techniques you find helpful in the revision process to improve sentence structures?

- o **In your opinion, how do syntactic errors impact the overall clarity and effectiveness of your written communication in English?**

- o Can you provide examples of situations where you believe syntactic errors affected the message you were trying to convey?
- o In what ways do you think addressing syntactic errors contributes to better communication in English?

13. **How has feedback on syntactic errors in your writing assignments influenced your approach to subsequent assignments?**
    - o Can you share a specific instance where instructor feedback or peer reviews on syntactic errors prompted you to change your writing style?
    - o How do you use feedback as a learning tool to minimize syntactic errors in future assignments?

14. **Can you share instances where you've observed improvement in avoiding syntactic errors throughout your English language learning journey?**

- Can you pinpoint specific practices or strategies that contributed to this improvement?
- In what ways has increased exposure to English writing influenced your ability to recognize and rectify syntactic errors?